

Yeltsin wants Gorbachev to quit

MOSCOW (AP) — Boris N. Yeltsin made a nationally televised appeal Tuesday for the resignation of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, accusing him of sacrificing reforms to a drive for personal power and dictatorship. The attack, the sharpest by the president of the Russian Republic in months, seemed certain to exacerbate the personal enmity between the two men and to rekindle the Soviet political crisis. "I warned in 1987 that Gorbachev has in his character a tendency to absolute personal power," said Mr. Yeltsin. "He has done all that and has led the country to a dictatorship, giving it a pretty name: presidential rule." Mr. Yeltsin said that his biggest mistake since becoming president of the Russian Federation in May 1990 was placing too much trust in Mr. Gorbachev's promises of economic and political reform. The heart of Mr. Yeltsin's argument was that power should be shifted from the central government, led by Mr. Gorbachev, to the 15 Soviet republics. Mr. Yeltsin is president of the parliament of the Russian Federation, which includes more than half of the Soviet population and most of its natural resources.

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Iran appeals to allies for time

TEHRAN (R) — Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani appealed to U.S.-led allies Tuesday to delay a ground offensive so Iraq could be persuaded to quit Kuwait through diplomatic efforts. The appeal, relayed through Turkish President Turgut Ozal, was reported just after U.S. President George Bush appeared to dismiss an 11th hour Soviet peace plan as inadequate — making a ground war increasingly likely. "With regards to hopes that have appeared for ending the war, all-out efforts should be made to materialize Iraq's proposal for pullout of its forces from Kuwait," the Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as telling Mr. Ozal by telephone. "He also expressed hope that the Turkish president would do all within his power to encourage the U.S.-led forces to show self-restraint regarding their intended ground offensive so that Baghdad could be persuaded to take practical steps," it said.

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Moscow rejects Bush reaction to peace plan

Soviets state firm stand against allied ground assault

Combined agency dispatches

SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER Alexander Bessmertnykh Tuesday dismissed U.S. president George Bush's approach to a Kremlin plan to end the Gulf war.

"That plan was addressed to the Iraqi leadership, so he rejected the plan which did not belong to him," Mr. Bessmertnykh told reporters.

Mr. Bush said Tuesday the plan "falls well short of what would be required." He said he had talked to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev about the proposal "and I've been frank with him."

British Prime Minister John Major also said Tuesday that he saw nothing in the peace plan that warranted a ceasefire or pause in the Gulf war.

Mr. Bessmertnykh said he did not consider Mr. Bush's reaction to the plan to be rejection. The foreign minister made the remarks to reporters after speaking to the Supreme Soviet legislature about the Gorbachev peace offer. He refused to disclose the points of the plan.

The proposal was presented to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein through his foreign minister, Tariq Aziz. Mr. Bessmertnykh said, Mr. Aziz was expected to return to Moscow with Iraq's response as soon as Wednesday, Mr. Bessmertnykh added.

Mr. Bessmertnykh said an allied ground offensive would "tremendously complicate" the Soviet-led peace process, if it occurred before the Kremlin received a response from Baghdad.

A U.S. military official in Washington said that a ground attack could begin at any time.

In his speech to lawmakers, Mr. Bessmertnykh said the situation was "too delicate" to reveal the contents of the plan to them.

Mr. Gorbachev gave the secret peace plan to Mr. Aziz Monday during a 3½ hour Kremlin meeting.

Offering an initial chilly reaction to the Soviet proposal while he posed for photographs at the start of a meeting with congressional leaders, Mr. Bush said he was "not going to give" in talks on Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait.

The president said he had told Gorbachev of his views, adding: "Very candidly... and I've been frank with him on this, while expressing appreciation for his sending it (the Soviet peace proposal) to us, it falls well short of what would be required."

"I would leave it right there for now," Mr. Bush said, declining to

answer questions from reporters.

He glanced down at notes as he spoke, suggesting he had anticipated this question and had a reply coached in the language he wanted.

Emerging from the meeting with Mr. Bush, House of Representatives Speaker Thomas Foley, a Washington Democrat, said Mr. Bush did not elaborate on the specific nature of his objections during his discussions with congressional leaders.

Mr. Foley said Mr. Bush merely indicated that "there were some aspects that fell short."

But representative John Murtha, a Pennsylvania Democrat, said he thought Mr. Bush was cool to the Soviet proposal because he did not want allied forces to lose momentum in their war effort.

"I don't think he's dismissing it, I think he's being very cautious," said Mr. Murtha, who just returned from a visit to U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia. "He doesn't want negotiations to stall it (the war)."

"It would be in my mind disastrous right now if we were to pause and let Saddam Hussein rehabilitate himself," Mr. Foley said the president did not give any timetable for the long-awaited allied invasion.

White House officials insisted there would be no change to the strategy of the allied war effort.

"The war goes on," presidential spokesman Martin Fitzwater told reporters after saying Mr. Bush had studied the text of Gorbachev's proposal.

The Soviet proposal put Mr. Bush in a delicate position by forcing him to avoid an appearance of rushing into a battle when a diplomatic option was available.

But he also had to balance military and strategic concerns. Some military experts have voiced worry that any unnecessary delay could cause the coalition troops, which have been streaming north towards the Saudi-Kuwait border in recent days, to lose their combat edge.

Last Friday Mr. Bush rejected an Iraqi ceasefire proposal on grounds it contained unacceptable conditions.

That opened the way for Mr. Gorbachev's initiative.

"President Gorbachev asked that I keep the details of it confidential and I'm going to do that," Mr. Bush said in his first personal public comment on the proposal. "I will respect that request in the interest of thoroughly exploring the initiative."

Mr. Bush insisted there would be no negotiations on the demand, endorsed

(Continued on page 3)

Israel reports missile attack

TEL AVIV (AP) — A single missile fired from western Iraq struck in Israel Tuesday, but apparently caused no casualties, the army said.

Chief army spokesman Nachman Shai gave no details on where the missile hit. "So far we have no reports of injuries or damage," he said.

Reporters in Tel Aviv said they heard sounds indicating at least two U.S.-supplied Patriot air-defence missiles were fired. They also heard a third explosion they could not immediately identify.

Brigadier General Shai would not comment on whether patriots were fired under standing army policy.

Warning sirens sounded throughout Israel at 7:55 p.m. (17:55 GMT), indicating a possible Iraqi missile attack. Israelis are ordered to don gas masks and enter sealed rooms during the alerts because of Iraqi threats to use chemical weapons.

Most regions of the country were quickly freed from the alert, indicating there was no sign of a chemical warhead. The last area freed was central Israel and parts of the occupied West Bank.

It was the 36th Scud missile fired at Israel since the start of the Gulf war on Jan. 17.

All of the attacks have involved conventional warheads.

Two people have been killed and 230 wounded in the previous attacks. An additional 11 deaths were blamed on heart attacks or misuse of gas masks. More than 10,000 apartments have been damaged or destroyed.

The last attack, involving two Scuds, was Saturday. Both landed without causing damage or casualties.

of face "the beginning of more tension in our region."

Mr. Velayati met with reporters on the second day of his official visit to Germany for talks on the Gulf war and bilateral relations.

"Clearly, any political solution has two fundamental requirements: Complete and unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, and the withdrawal of foreign forces from the region," the minister said.

Mr. Aziz met in Moscow with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev Monday and reportedly received a plan to end the war.

"It is important and necessary that the other side also manifest the commitment to a political solution rather than a military one which would indeed be the beginning of more tension in our region," Mr. Velayati said in reference to the U.S.-led coalition fighting Iraq.

Mr. Velayati also mentioned an Iranian initiative for security arrangements in the Gulf once the war is over.

He said U.N. peacekeeping forces could be used in the region to prevent a flareup of tensions.

Mr. Velayati further said that Israel would not be included in such a security arrangement, which he said would cover Iran, Iraq and the six nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

He said Iran wants to be deeply involved in security measures in the Gulf.

Mr. Velayati also said that according to Iranian estimates, "Tens of thousands" of Iraqis have been "killed and injured" by U.S. bombing raids.



'SOUVENIR': Jordanians arriving from Iraq across the border display a missile part they picked up on their way from Baghdad to the border (photo by Yousef Al 'Alban)

Soviet plan said to contain six points

Combined agency dispatches

THE SOVIET UNION'S proposed peace plan to avert a ground war in the Gulf calls for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait in return for certain international undertakings and the deployment of a U.N. peacekeeping force between Iraq and Kuwait, reports said Tuesday.

According to Radio Monte Carlo, following are the six points of the peace proposal as submitted by the Soviet leadership to Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz:

— An Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions;

— Cancellation of all sanctions imposed on Iraq and providing guarantees by the world community to refrain from boycotting Iraq following its withdrawal from Kuwait;

— Withdrawal of allied forces and liquidation of foreign bases in the region;

— Guarantees for Iraq's essential role in formulating a regional security system;

— Commencement of a process aimed at resolving the region's other issues which foremost include the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Arab lands through a U.N.-sponsored international conference; and

— International contribution towards the reconstruction of Iraq's civilian installation and solutions for Iraqi debt problems.

Italian Rai television said that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's proposal, whose details have not been made public, called for Iraq to announce its unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

A ceasefire would follow to allow both the Iraqi pullout and the deployment of U.N. peacekeeping forces on the frontier between Kuwait and Iraq. The area would remain under U.N. supervision after the war's end, the television report said the plan envisaged.

With the U.N. force in place, the multinational coalition would also remove its forces from the region.

The end of hostilities would be followed by the removal of the U.N.'s economic sanctions on Iraq and talks would begin among Middle Eastern states towards the settlement of regional issues, the broadcast said.

On Monday, the German newspaper Bild said the Soviet plan contained several similar proposals, but made no mention of a U.N. peace-keeping role. Instead, it said the plan called for the Soviet Union to support maintaining Iraq's state structure and borders.

A Soviet spokesman later told British television that the Bild report "more or less" reflected the plan.

Aziz returns home after telling Iranians of serious peace move

Combined agency dispatches

FOREIGN MINISTER Tariq Aziz returned home by road from Iran Tuesday, carrying a Soviet proposal which Moscow hoped would fend off all-out ground war in the Gulf.

The U.S.-led allied war against Iraq showed no sign of pausing while the diplomacy unfolded. Warplanes repeatedly bombed Baghdad late Monday and early Tuesday in the heaviest onslaught on the capital in several days.

Mr. Aziz flew from the Iranian province of Bakhtaran, in an Iranian jetliner. From there, he travelled overland to Baghdad, 275 kilometres away, sources said.

But as President Saddam Hussein awaited Mr. Aziz's arrival to discuss the proposal with his aides and give his final response, President George Bush announced in Washington that the Soviet plan "falls well short of what would be required" to end the war.

"As far as I'm concerned, there are no negotiations, no concessions," Mr. Bush said.

Details of the plan have not been disclosed. But the U.S. stance dampened hopes that it would lead to peace.

There were strong indications that Baghdad would respond positively to the initiative. In Moscow, officials said Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was hopeful that President Saddam would accept the plan, which the Soviet leader handed to Mr. Aziz during a Kremlin meeting Monday.

Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani, who met with Mr. Aziz before the latter's departure for Baghdad, "ex-

'Soviet military team in Iraq'

The Palestinian news agency Wafa said in a report from Baghdad, sent to Renter, that a Soviet military delegation arrived in the Iraqi capital Tuesday night.

It quoted the head of the delegation, whom it did not name, as saying the group would meet Iraqi commanders. It gave no further details.

pressed optimism towards the initial gesture" from Baghdad, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

The Iranian leader added that he hoped the war "will be halted very soon." Along with the Soviets, Iran has played a key role in trying to persuade Iraq to quit Kuwait.

Mr. Rafsanjani later telephoned Turkish President Turgut Ozal, IRNA said, and told him that "hopes have appeared for ending the war." But, he added, "efforts should be made to realise Iraq's proposal for the pullout of its forces from Kuwait."

Mr. Aziz, speaking after the meeting with Mr. Rafsanjani, said the offer Iraq made Friday to withdraw from Kuwait was "a serious measure," reported IRNA.

The United States and its key allies have rejected the initial Iraqi offer that linked a withdrawal from Kuwait to a pullout of the allied forces from the Gulf and Israel from the occupied territories.

"Acceptance of Security Council Resolution 660 and the start of negotiations for withdrawal from Kuwait has been a serious measure and we continue to insist upon it," IRNA quoted Mr. Aziz as saying.

The resolution, the first of 12 adopted by the Security Council after

Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, called for an unconditional withdrawal from the emirate and for negotiations between the governments of Iraq and Kuwait to resolve financial and territorial disputes.

There was no official word on how or when Iraq would make known its response to the Soviet plan.

Government sources, however, privately told reporters to expect a meeting of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council, which President Saddam chairs, Tuesday night.

Soviet officials said they expected Mr. Aziz back in Moscow in a day or two.

The government newspaper Al Jomhuriya said Tuesday: "Iraq will continue holding the olive peace branches in one hand and the rifle in the other."

Baghdad said last Friday for the first time that it would consider U.N. demands that it withdraw from Kuwait. But it linked the offer to conditions rejected by Washington and its allies.

The Soviet plan — put to Mr. Aziz by President Mikhail Gorbachev Monday — was reported to contain assurances that the allies would not punish President Saddam or dismember Iraq if he unconditionally withdraws troops from Kuwait.

In an unusual comment, one newspaper said that President Saddam's downfall was one of the allies' key objectives.

"The real purpose of the colonialist campaign led by the United States is not the so-called liberation of Kuwait," Al Iraq newspaper said.

"The hostile objective aims at two things — the destruction of Iraq and the elimination of its leader Saddam Hussein."

Hinting Iraq would use chemical weapons, the Defence Ministry newspaper Al Qadiyiah warned the allies and Israel of "horrible surprises" if they did not stop killing Iraqi civilians.

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20,000 killed and 60,000 said wounded in 26 days

Combined agency dispatches

ALLIED BOMBERS pounded Baghdad relentlessly hours Tuesday and an Iraqi minister was quoted as saying if more than 20,000 Iraqis were killed and 60,000 wounded in first 26 days of the war.

With the 34-day-old Gulf war poised between peace and a huge land battle, the Iraqi capital was blasted by some of the heaviest raids of the conflict.

Between 8 p.m. (1700 GMT) Monday and dawn Tuesday, more than 30 explosions rocked the Al Rashid hotel in a modern district of the city built since President Saddam Hussein came to power in 1979.

Foreign journalists in the hotel were forced to retreat to the basement shelter and bombing was so intense that some of them said they breathed smoke from the blasts.

The state-run Tehran daily Jomhuri Islami said Iraq's deputy prime minister, Saeedoun Hammadi, reported the casualty figures to Iran's first deputy foreign minister, Ali Mohammad Besharati, during talks last week, according to IRNA.

It did not break down the casualties between soldiers and civilians.

The newspaper also said it was told by Mr. Besharati that Dr. Hammadi estimated allied air

raids had inflicted \$200 billion in damage on Iraq since the war began Jan. 17.

Previous official Iraqi casualty reports have been sketchy, clearly adding up to many hundreds but not compiled in any comprehensive fashion. Only a handful of military casualties have been reported in Iraq, and allied commanders have declined to give estimates.

The Iranian report gave no indication of the statistical basis for Dr. Hammadi's figures.

The costliest single incident, in terms of civilian casualties, was the U.S. air strike on Baghdad on Feb. 13, demolishing a facility which Iraq said was a civilian air raid shelter and which the Americans claimed was a military bunker.

Iraqi authorities said at least 314 people, mostly women and children, have been killed.

Tehran Radio announced that a memorial service for the victims of that raid would be held Wednesday at a mosque in the Iranian capital.

According to the Jomhuri Islami article, Mr. Hammadi told Besharati that the United States went to war "not to liberate Kuwait... but for the sake of oil, with the intention of annihilating Iraq."

Dr. Hammadi visited Tehran last week, bringing an 11-page response from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to a still-

undisclosed Iranian peace initiative.

Huge explosions and flames lit up the Baghdad sky within one kilometre of the Al Rashid Monday night. One raid lasted five hours and the walls of the 15-storey hotel heaved to the blasts.

The first light of dawn showed a vast area near the Al Rashid covered with rubble and twisted metal.

German television correspondent Christoph Maria Froehder said he saw several cruise missiles swooshing by the hotel and exploding in the area.

Iraq's 54th military communiqué of the war issued Tuesday said allied planes had raided civilian targets 65 times in the previous 24 hours in an attempt to weaken civilian morale.

Among the sites struck were houses in residential areas, villages, bridges, a candle factory and a flour mill, it reported.

Some 180 other raids were aimed at military targets in the "southern operations sector" — Iraq's reference to Kuwait and southern Iraq.

"The criminal Americans, Zionists and their allies have continued their barbaric raids, which are designed to cause harm to the Iraq citizen, influence his morale and undermine the lofty structure built by the revolution but their designs have failed," the communiqué said.

The army has demolished more than 380 Palestinian homes and sealed more than 240 in the three-year uprising.

In the Bethlehem area, Tuesday's strike was called to mourn the death of Salama Muslan of Beit Sabour, who died of a bullet wound to the head Monday night. The army said he was apparently killed by a Jewish settler.

The five houses demolished or sealed were in Nabulus and in the Gaza town of Rafah. A total of 44 people lived in the houses, reporters said.

The army has demolished more than 380 Palestinian homes and sealed more than 240 in the three-year uprising.

Velayati: Iraq will quit Kuwait, but allies should also leave Gulf

Iran wants regional security system

Combined agency dispatches

IRAN'S FOREIGN Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said Tuesday he was convinced Iraq is ready to leave Kuwait unconditionally, but that it is necessary for U.S.-led forces to leave the Gulf region.

Mr. Velayati also said a regional security arrangement proposed by Tehran would cover the Gulf countries, but not Israel.

Mr. Velayati also said he was told by his Iraqi counterpart, Tariq Aziz, that other issues raised by Baghdad were not meant as preconditions for leaving Kuwait.

Last week, Iraq said it was ready to withdraw its troops from Kuwait, but at the same time said the Palestinian question and other issues need to be resolved.

He said he based his belief of Iraq's readiness to withdraw unconditionally on his talks with Mr. Aziz in Tehran Sunday and the meeting Mr. Aziz had in Tehran Tuesday with Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on a Soviet peace plan.

Mr. Velayati said he had no doubts on the plan presented to Tariq Aziz in Moscow by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, but President George Bush said Tuesday it "falls well short" of U.S. requirements for ending the war.

An adviser to Mr. Gorbachev said Tuesday that Mr. Aziz told Soviet leader that Baghdad wants to pull out of Kuwait.

Andrei Grachev underscored in interview with the Europe-1 network that Iraq's leadership could accept the unconditional



Ali Akbar Velayati

withdrawal of its troops.

Mr. Grachev said that Mr. Aziz "confirmed the important change of principle in the Iraqi position, namely that Iraq would accept the unconditional retreat of its troops from Kuwait, and thus the cancellation of the results of its operations of Aug. 2."

Mr. Velayati said that in talks last week, Mr. Aziz told him "other elements and issues" are "not conditions for withdrawal" but are matters that "should be addressed."

Mr. Aziz also said Iraq is "ready to abide by" U.N. resolution 660, which calls for Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Iraq, said Mr. Velayati.

"I can tell you that now they are ready to withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally, on the basis of Resolution 660. That's my understanding," he said.

But Mr. Velayati also said the United States and its allies must show the same willingness to negotiate a political solution as Iraq

Israel eases curfew for schools, but demolishes homes

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli army allowed young children to return to school in parts of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip Tuesday for the first time in the Gulf war. But curfews still kept Palestinians in their homes in widespread areas.

In the Gaza Strip, soldiers demolished two homes to punish Palestinians suspected of anti-Israeli activities. Arab reporters said three houses of Palestinians were sealed shut in the West Bank city of Nabulus.

A general strike shut down Bethlehem and the nearby villages of Beit Sabour and Beit Jala as Palestinians mourned the shooting death of a 14-year-old boy Monday night, reportedly by a Jewish settler.

In most large towns in the West Bank, the army allowed children in kindergarten through fourth grade to go back to classes, and it lifted curfews in the towns from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. (0100-1500 GMT).

It was the longest opening in the occupied territories since the army ordered the entire 1.7 million population of the West Bank and Gaza to stay in their homes on Jan. 17 to prevent demonstrations in support of Iraq.

However, the school reopening policy was extended only to farm villages in the Gaza Strip, and Palestinians in many refugee

campes and small towns in the West Bank also remained under curfew.

The occupied territories still were designated as closed military areas, meaning residents are allowed only with special permits and reporters are prohibited from entering. About 11,000 of the 110,000 Palestinians who worked in Israel before the war have been given permits to go back to their jobs.

An army spokeswoman could not say Tuesday where curfews in the West Bank were lifted and where they remained in force.

Reporters said schools were reopened and curfews eased in Nabulus, Jenin, Tulkarem, Hebron and Qalqilya. They said the cur-

few was still on in Ramallah, near Jerusalem, and in many villages and refugee camps.

It could not be determined how many students were allowed back in class in the West Bank. Reporters said the school reopenings affected only about 5,000 students in rural areas of Gaza.

The occupied territories' more than 500,000 students, from kindergarten through high school, have been out of school since the blanket curfew was clamped on the Palestinian population just hours after the Gulf war started.

While the army maintains the curfew is a "security" measure, many Palestinians and human

rights groups say it is being used to put an end to the 38-month uprising.

Soviet military condemns Bush, criticises NATO

MOSCOW (R) — One of the Soviet Union's top military figures said Tuesday U.S. President George Bush's decision to go to war against Iraq showed he was devoted to old-style use of force to solve world problems.

At the same time, the Defence Ministry newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda said the West's NATO alliance had seized on the Gulf conflict to build up its forces in the region to an extent that could threaten the overall East-West disarmament process.

"I am sure ... that this war should never have been started,"

Marshal Viktor Kulikov, one-time commander-in-chief of the former East bloc's Warsaw pact alliance, told the newspaper Rabochaya Tribuna.

"Peaceful forms of pressure should have been continued and dialogue should have been pursued, which is what our diplomats and President Mikhail Gorbachev argued for. A victory after that would have been something new and desirable."

"But the language of guns and death-dealing B-52 bombers is something we have been familiar with for a long time. It has

nothing in common with the 'new thinking' which the Americans applauded warmly but did little concrete to support."

Marshal Kulikov, now a senior adviser in the Defence Ministry and a member of the Soviet parliament, added: "And in that one can say Bush has lost to Gorbachev totally. Bush has remained, as it turns out, a devoted follower of old thinking."

His criticism of the U.S. was the latest in a series of military and political figures around Mr. Gorbachev.

It appeared a day after Mr.

Gorbachev presented Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz with a peace plan which Soviet officials said they hoped could head off a bloody land offensive.

"The position of the Soviet Union remains unequivocal," said Marshal Kulikov. "We are for an immediate end to this war and for a solution of the problem by political means. Gorbachev's talks with Aziz are another clear confirmation of that."

"I think it is now up to those abroad, who so fervently supported 'new thinking' in words," he added.

Krasnaya Zvezda said that despite NATO denials it was clear that the alliance — now the only effective military bloc in Europe — had coordinated preparations for the Gulf war.

"It must also be noted that the Gulf crisis had brought the resurgence in NATO of supporters of a build-up of the bloc's military might," the Defence Ministry organ said.

"Simultaneously additional measures are being planned for the modernisation of the armed forces and the improvement of the military infrastructure of the

bloc in Southern Europe and the rendering of military aid to the countries of this region."

Krasnaya Zvezda declared: "It is also alarming that, according to reports, work on programmes for reducing force strengths and armaments in NATO committees has been suspended."

"Unfortunately, it can be stated that this reaction of NATO to the crisis in the Gulf could well put in doubt all that has been achieved in the sphere of disarmament on the continent of Europe and in the world at large."

Sheikh Sabah: No talks with Iraq even after pullout

ABU DHABI (AP) — Kuwait's foreign minister says his government will not negotiate with Iraq even after its forces leave Kuwait, according to a newspaper report Tuesday.

"We will not hold talks or negotiations after withdrawal, neither with the present nor with a new Iraqi leadership," Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad said in a statement published by Al Itihad, a state-run newspaper in the United Arab Emirates.

"We have agreements with Iraq which must be implemented and Kuwait will not negotiate with Iraq after the Iraqi troop withdrawal," he said.

But the minister insisted on Iraqi reparations for destruction sustained in the invasion and occupation of his country. He gave no figures. Kuwait reportedly will need some \$60 billion to rehabilitate the country if and when liberated.

The hardline stance contradicts previous statements by leaders of the Kuwaiti government-in-exile indicating they were prepared to

discuss disputes with Baghdad after the Iraqis pulled out from Kuwait.

Arab leaders allied with Kuwait have often stressed that disputes could be settled after the withdrawal through negotiations within an Arab, Islamic or international framework.

Officials at Sheikh Sabah's office in Taif, current base for the Kuwaiti government-in-exile, told the Associated Press they would check with him for confirmation of the published statement and report back.

The statement would preclude negotiations on demarcation of borders, including the two islands of Warba and Bubiyan, or Iraqi demands for compensation of oil Kuwait allegedly pumped from the Rumailah field straddling the border.

Sheikh Sabah's statement appeared to rule out any future talk on two islands, Kuwaiti sources said his reference to previous agreement which marked Warba and Bubiyan islands as Kuwaiti.

Iraq says London blast shows civil war in 'evil empire'

NICOSIA (R) — Iraq said Tuesday the bombing of two London railway stations showed civil war was raging in the degenerate "evil empire" of Britain.

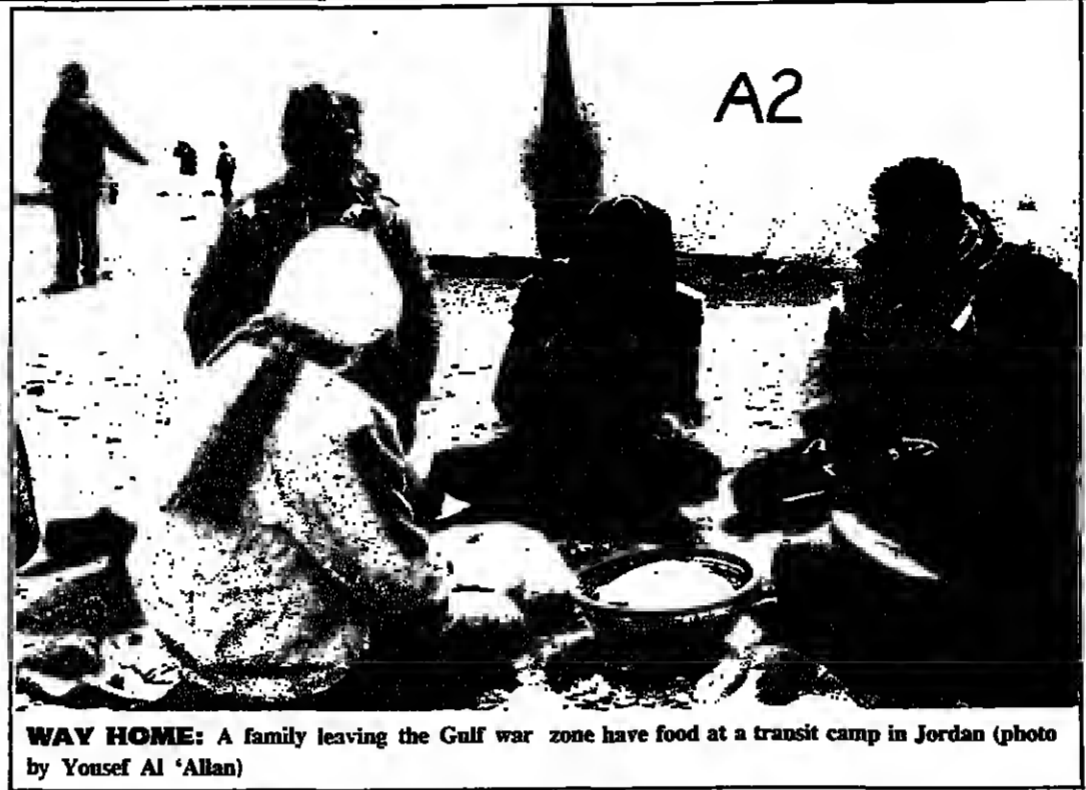
The Irish Republican Army (IRA) acknowledged responsibility for the bombs that killed one person and wounded 43 Monday.

"These explosions were not isolated actions... they were among the acts of defiance and resistance which the secret IRA has been carrying out regularly against British institutions and centres in revenge and protest for the British occupation of Northern Ireland," Baghdad Radio said.

"The capital of imperialism, evil and aggression — London — has been turned into an arena of confrontation, explosions and acts of violence," said the radio.

It said the two blasts showed that the government of Prime Minister John Major was in a "shaky position," unable to maintain security or solve national problems by democratic means.

The radio noted that the explosions occurred less than two weeks after the Feb. 7 Iraq mortar attack on Mr. Major's official residence at 10 Downing Street.



WAY HOME: A family leaving the Gulf war zone have food at a transit camp in Jordan (photo by Yusef Al 'Allan)

Israel hopes to borrow \$1b to help 'absorption'

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel hopes to borrow \$1 billion, using the credit lines of Jewish groups in the United States and Canada, to help absorb thousands of Soviet immigrants, the quasi-governmental Jewish Agency announced Monday.

Mendel Kaplan, the agency's board chairman, told a news conference, the agency would ask North American chapters of the Council of Jewish Federations to guarantee the loan.

The funds, in turn, will be loaned out to Soviet immigrants at concessionary rates, he said.

Mr. Kaplan said the idea was "to make the maximum amount of funds available from the diaspora" to resettle up to one million Soviets over the next several years. Some \$2.5 billion also is being sought in "operation exodus" fund-raising appeals, he said.

While Kaplan described it as "an ingenious method of funding," the proposal drew a chorus of protest in Israel because it will require the immigrants to accept

loans to cover part of the cost of resettlement, rather than getting it all as a grant.

Michael Kleiner, chairman of the parliament's absorption committee, said the move by the Jewish Agency could reduce the number of Soviet Jews willing to come to Israel.

"It reminds me of the story of the Jew who wanted to force his mule to eat less and less food," Mr. Kleiner said. "One day the mule died and the Jew said, what a pity. I had almost succeeded in getting him to eat nothing at all."

Absorption Minister Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz said cuts in benefits for immigrants were cutting the number of arrivals, along with the war in the Gulf.

The pace of immigration has slowed in the first six weeks this year to less than half the rate of 1990. The estimate of Jews arriving this year has been cut from 100,000 to 300,000.

Mr. Kaplan argued that new ways of raising money must be found to cover the estimated \$1

billion cost of absorbing one million Soviets.

He added that he did not believe immigration would be affected by the style of funding but "rather the conditions in the Soviet Union."

The agency's loan plan comes after the government already has cut the allowance a newly arrived family receives from 21,000 shekels (\$10,500) to 14,000 shekels (\$7,000) in the past year.

The Jewish Agency had provided some 38 per cent of the total as a grant. It now would make about 42 per cent available but as a loan, Mr. Kaplan said.

He said the exact terms of the loan had not yet been worked out, but said it would require no repayments for the first three years.

The agency will continue to cover all of an immigrant's transportation costs to Israel.

The increase in Soviet immigration from about 12,500 in 1989 to nearly 136,000 last year has strained financing.

Wife of Siad Barre in Cairo

CAIRO (R) — The wife of deposed Somali President Mohammad Siad Barre has arrived in Cairo with 28 members of her family, the Somali embassy and airport sources said Tuesday. The mass-circulation Egyptian newspaper Al Akhbar said she was granted political asylum. Foreign Ministry officials said they had no information of such a move. Airport sources said Mrs. Siad Barre arrived on an Egyptian flight from Nairobi Monday. "Yes, they have arrived and that is the truth, no one can hide it," a Somali embassy official said. Mr. Siad Barre was overthrown last month and his whereabouts are unknown.

Ozal wants Saddam toppled

By Alistair Lyon
Reuters

ANKARA — Turkish leader Turgut Ozal, urging the downfall of the Iraqi government, said President Saddam Hussein's "back should be broken" to shorten the Gulf war.

Turkey had let U.S. planes bomb Iraq from its territory to help remove a "potential threat from a dangerous neighbour."

Mr. Ozal told businessmen in Adana, near the southern Incirlik airbase.

"The removal of regimes so dangerous for us is to our benefit ... that is why we gave (the Americans use of) Incirlik," he said.

"To let the war end as soon as possible, the man's back should be broken, not that of his people. If the war is prolonged, his people's back will also be broken," said Mr. Ozal.

In typically blunt style, Mr. Ozal defended his Gulf crisis decisions as marking a radical foreign policy departure which would earn Turkey a place at the post-war negotiating table.

The Turkish president, who often talks by telephone with U.S. President George Bush, said he doubted whether the United States would allow the Iraqi government to survive.

"Maybe the Soviet Union wants him (President Saddam) to live on, but the U.S. president that I know will not let go so easily. After all the expense and troop deployment he will not leave without achieving a result. It is not correct politically either."

"What I mean by result is that I

don't think it will be easy for them (Iraqi leaders) to stay in power," he said.

"They will do their best to stay. They may try through the Russians or maybe the French will intervene because they have debts to collect — they have pinned their hopes on Saddam to a certain extent."

Mr. Ozal poured scorn on domestic opponents who criticised him for siding firmly with the multinational alliance against Iraq and risking Iraqi retaliation for U.S. raids from Incirlik.

"We know for certain that the United States will win this war ... imagine a Third World country, no matter how well armed, facing the world's giant."

Mr. Ozal said U.S. forces could penetrate deep into Iraq if necessary and predicted the war would be over in a month.

"What will happen in this region (after the war) is a different matter. There may be some confusion," he said.

Mr. Ozal said Turkey had helped the allies by tying down Iraqi troops across the border but did not fear an Iraqi attack.

"I had guessed that Saddam would not attack Turkey. He quickly solved problems with Iran so as not to face a front from there. Why should he open a front with Turkey?"

He also cited psychological reasons why Iraq, once part of the Ottoman empire, would not cross swords with Turkey.

"They still have in them the old fear of the Ottomans. It is not easy for them to get rid of this. If we actually fight them, this fear may go away but it will remain as long as we don't."

Mr. Ozal said all eyes had been on Turkey after Iraq's August 2 invasion of Kuwait to see if it would maintain what he called its former reticent foreign policy.

"Would we say, 'long live the snake which does not hurt me'?" he said, quoting a Turkish proverb. "We were the first to join the embargo (against Iraq). The West was surprised. We were in a way a leader to the rest of the world in this respect."

Soon after the invasion of Kuwait, Turkey cut two Iraqi oil export pipelines across its territory, halted trade with Iraq, a major trading partner and sent more troops to the southeast.

Turkey, a secular state with an overwhelmingly Muslim population, sent no troops to Saudi Arabia, but allowed U.S. bombers to use Incirlik from the second day of the war.

Iraq protested at what it called unjustified aggression, but has not retaliated militarily. This month Ankara asked Baghdad to withdraw 23 diplomats and other officials. Arab diplomats said the 23 Iraqis and 85 family members had left a week ago.

"God willing, when the peace table is set up we shall have a bigger say in proportion to the role we have played," Mr. Ozal said.

"During this war Turkey has emerged as an advanced country. Formerly we did not have an individualistic foreign policy. We have changed this radically," Mr. Ozal said.

Speaking of himself, he added: "Ozal will be courageous when this is needed to advance Turkey. All this is calculation."

Iraqi Red Crescent chief appeals for food, medicine

BAGHDAD (AP) — The chief of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society appealed Tuesday for food and medical supplies he said are urgently needed to overcome severe shortages.

Dr. Ibrahim Al Nouri told the Associated Press that the country's 18 million people could soon be threatened with epidemics of cholera and typhoid because of damage to the water and sewage system. Both diseases are spread by drinking contaminated water.

"Cases of diarrhoea already have been reported. It could be from water or it could be caused by lack of proper sanitation," he said.

Mr. Nouri said he has appealed to the Swiss-based International Committee of the Red Cross to send a special team and equipment to deal with the water problem before the health situation deteriorates further.

Medical officials say hot weather in a few weeks would greatly increase the risk of disease.

He said Iraq probably needs doctors and nurses from foreign countries to help Iraqi medical staff in hospitals. Medical teams from Algeria, Mauritania, Jordan and Palestine already are helping in Baghdad hospitals.

"We try to deal with all these problems, but I must admit that we are in dire need of help," he said.

Mr. Nouri said his society has received some 100 tons of medicine and food supplies since the U.N. embargo began last August. But shortages are still acute, he said.

Mr. Nouri said the U.N. embargo against Iraq has sharply curtailed imports of essential medical supplies, although U.N. officials say medicine is supposed to be exempt from the sanctions.

On Monday, the International Red Cross said it had sent 35 tons of medical supplies to Iraq through Iran since the outbreak of war Jan. 17.

Angelo Gnaedinger, the Red Cross' representative for the Middle East and North Africa, told Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency that the volume of supplies could be increased according to need.

The Red Cross, also distributes charitable contributions of food sent to Iraq by sympathetic organisations abroad.

He said Iraq has serious shortages of milk and wheat flour. People are now rationed to only four kilograms of flour a month and most bakeries are closed.

The bite of the shortage was evident Tuesday at the Red Crescent distribution centre, where thousands of people crowded around five trucks arriving from Jordan filled with packs of pita bread. Many people clambered onto the trucks to be sure of getting some of the available food.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Maghreb foreign ministers to meet

ALGIERS (R) — Foreign ministers of five North African States, all of which want a ceasefire in the Gulf war, will meet in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi Wednesday to discuss the conflict, diplomatic sources said Tuesday. They said the ministers from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania, grouped in the Arab Maghreb Union, were likely to discuss a Soviet peace plan presented to Iraq on Monday. All five states, including Morocco which has sent troops to join the U.S.-coalition fighting Iraq, have backed the Iraqi offer to withdraw from Kuwait announced last Friday. The sources said they could be expected to throw their weight behind the Soviet peace plan if Baghdad accepted it. Public opinion in the Maghreb states overwhelmingly supports Iraq and leaders have been forced to take a more pro-Iraq line.

French envoy in Libya for Gulf talks

NICOSIA (R) — Michel Vauzelle, president of the French parliament's foreign affairs commission, is in Libya for talks on ways of ending the Gulf war and ensuring regional security, the Libyan news agency (JANA) reported Tuesday. It quoted Mr. Vauzelle as saying after his arrival late on Monday that Paris and Tripoli were playing an "important role" to establish peace and security in the Middle East. Mr. Vauzelle, a former spokesman for French President Francois Mitterrand, last week visited Libya's North African neighbour to discuss prospects for peace in the Gulf. JANA quoted him as saying his visit came within the framework of finding a solution to the Gulf war as Libya was current president of the Arab Maghreb Union.

Improved hopes hostages will be freed

BEIRUT (R) — A senior Shi'ite Muslim cleric said Tuesday the Gulf war improved hopes of freedom for Western hostages held by pro-Iranians in Lebanon. "The Gulf events have created a positive atmosphere for the hostages. We expect a better hope for their release," Sheikh Mohammad Mehdi Shamseddine, the vice-president of the Higher Islamic Shi'ite Council in Lebanon, told a news conference. There are six Americans, three Britons, two Germans and an Italian kidnapped in Lebanon. Most are believed to be held by members of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God). The group denies any involvement in hostage-taking.

Iraqi murdered in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (AP) — The body of a 31-year-old Iraqi man was found in a village near Colombo five days after he was stabbed to death, police said Tuesday. Police inspector Rohan Fernando said the body of Shalim Ahmad was found Monday in a field near Wanduramulla village, 22 kilometres southeast of Colombo. He said there was no political motive in the killing. "We are holding two men as murder suspects and have recovered the weapon. We think it is related to a robbery but are not sure as yet," the inspector said. He said the two suspects belonged to the village but refused to identify them further. Ahmad was married to a Sri Lankan woman he had met in Kuwait. The couple, who have two children, came to Sri Lanka soon after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August last year. Ahmad's wife had reported him missing last week, Mr. Fernando said.

3 wounded by mine explosion in Lebanon

SIDON, Lebanon (R) — Two Lebanese soldiers and a civilian were wounded Tuesday when a land mine exploded in a divided village in South Lebanon, security sources said. They said the mine was apparently set off by an army bulldozer clearing a road in Mlikh, a former battlefield on the edge of an Israeli-declared "security zone" in the south. The mine-clearing operation is in preparation for Lebanese troops to deploy in the shattered village, half of which is held by militiamen of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA). Some 3,000 troops moved into the south two weeks ago while Palestinian and Lebanese guerrillas withdrew as part of a plan to extend the government's authority over all of Lebanon.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES

04:52 Fajr
06:10 (Sunrise) Duha
11:49 Dhuhur
14:59 Asr
17:29 Maghrib
18:46 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swatish, Tel. 810741
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637783
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624594
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622666
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 653526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

A drop in temperatures will take place and some clouds appear at different altitudes. Scattered showers are expected in the northern parts of Jordan.

Amman Min./Max. temp. 4/15
Aqaba 12/22
Dhahran 3/17
Jordan Valley 9/20

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 749364
Dr. Akram Samhan 804611
Dr. Yahya Abdul Rahim 736702
Firas Pharmacy 661912
Pendous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 857055

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 749364
Dr. Akram Samhan 804611
Dr. Yahya Abdul Rahim 736702
Firas Pharmacy 661912
Pendous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 857055

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate

REPAIRS

630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 821111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blind Bank 775121
Highway Police 842402
Traffic Police 884591
Public Security Department 43031
Hotel Complaints 605890
Proc Complaints 661178
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 810230
Central Amman Telephone

REPAIRS

664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Midhara 7781012
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf 77811126
Army, Marka 89161175
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983233
Zarqa National Hospital (09)91071
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Great Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Jds per kg.
Apple 550 / 480

Benana 300 / 450
Banana (Mukammal) 450 / 400
Beans 580 / 500
Cabbage 80 / 40
Carrot 180 / 120
Cauliflower 280 / 240
Cucumbers (large) 100 / 50
Cucumbers (small) 200 / 150
Dates 300 / 400
Eggplant 200 / 150
Garlic 1600 / 1400
Lemon 200 / 150
Marrow (large) 160 / 100
Marrow (small) 340 / 280
Onion (dry) 280 / 220
Onion (green) 180 / 120
Okra 600 / 500
Orange 540 / 220
Pepper (hot) 400 / 350
Pepper (sweet) 160 / 100
Potato 210 / 160
Radish 100 / 50
Sage 400 / 300
Spanish 120 / 80
Tomatoes 180 / 140

UNICEF, WHO send medical supplies to Iraq

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organisation (WHO) Friday sent a shipment of 10,000 worth of medical supplies to help about three million people in Iraq.

The medical supplies include antibiotics, oral rehydration salts and other essential drugs, according to UNICEF. It is the first known international mission to visit Iraq since the outbreak of the war on Jan. 17. Jordanian officials said some truck loads of medicine and food stuffs arrived in Baghdad Monday.

In a statement announcing the mission, U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said, "the dispatch of such medical supplies could be within the spirit of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the U.N. convention on the Rights of the Child and the Declaration of the World Summit on Children of September 1990."

The seven-member team, who left via Iran with 54 tonnes of supplies "are also aiming to ascertain essential health care needs of the civilian population and to implement a programme suitable to the situation in Iraq," Niger Fisher, UNICEF's deputy regional director told the Jordan Times. The mission, which left for Baghdad in 12 loaded trucks, consists of specialists to evaluate the drug supply, trauma in children, water and sanitation supply logistics as well as an epidemiologist, Fisher said.

The leaders of the team: Richard Reid, regional director of UNICEF and Dr. Ali Khogali, director of the WHO, "have remained in Baghdad to hold talks with the Iraqi minister of health and to look at water and health facilities in detail," according to Fisher. UNICEF is especially concerned about the Tigris River as Iraqi citizens use it for drinking and washing their clothes at the same time. The river is highly polluted," Fisher said.

Fisher added that while the two team leaders are in Iraq, "depend-

ing on their assessment of the situation, they will develop a broader programme."

The mission was greatly assisted by the government of Iran and by the Iranian Red Crescent Society, who cleared the shipment through the Islamic Republic and provided transport to the Iraqi border, according to Fisher who was in Iran supervising the shipment. At the border, the mission and its officials while medical supplies were transferred to trucks of the Red Crescent Society of Iraq, he added.

UNICEF, who in November sent a small shipment of medical supplies to Iraq, "is also hoping to send another similar shipment in the coming few weeks," Fisher told the Jordan Times. "When the two leaders return from Iraq, they will report their findings and recommendations to the head offices in New York," he added.

According to UNICEF, there will be a meeting of humanitarian aid agencies to look at the results of the mission and see what programme is to be followed in Iraq.

Israel allows more Palestinians to cross to occupied territories

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Israeli authorities started allowing 400 Palestinians to cross the King Hussein and Prince Mohammad bridges on the River Jordan on a daily basis as of Wednesday on their way back to the occupied Arab territories according to an announcement by the Public Security Department (PSD).

The announcement which said that 200 would be allowed across each of the bridges, followed long delay imposed by the Israelis on travellers to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip over the past four weeks.

Thousands of Palestinians have been stranded in Jordan after leaving Kuwait and other Gulf countries due to the ban imposed by Israel for what it said was security reasons following the imposition of a blanket curfew on the occupied territories.

The Department of Palestinian Affairs at the foreign ministry said that around 5,000 Palestinians, most of them penniless and homeless, were affected by the ban. The department said that it was holding intensive contacts with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Truce Supervi-

sion Organisation to ensure their return to their homeland.

Rateb Amer from the Department of Palestinian Affairs said in a statement Monday that at least 30 Palestinians have lost their residency permits due to the delay, and that meant they can not go back to the occupied homeland.

These Palestinians have been issued these permits by the Israeli authorities upon leaving the occupied territories, and once the permits expire, their holders can not go back home, Amer said in his statement.

Representatives of the stranded Palestinians staged two protest marches in Amman during this month, one of which was held Monday, during which the protesters marched to the ICRC and United Nations offices in Amman demanding that they be allowed to return.

Normally, the Israelis allow more than 1,000 persons to cross into the West Bank every day by this time of the year, rising to more than 3,000 during the summer, but they have reduced the number in the past four weeks to less than 50 a day.

Energy minister denies report on rationing of gas cylinders

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Tuesday denied a local newspaper report that rationing of gas cylinders will be applied in Jordan, and said that the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC) has huge stocks of gas cylinders sufficient for the country for a long time to come.

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Thabet Al Taher said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that gas cylinders would continue to be distributed to all centres as usual without any change whatsoever.

Taher was commenting on a report published by Al Dustour daily which said that the JPRC has started reducing by half the amount of gas cylinders sold for domestic use in order to keep sufficient reserves in store for as long time as possible.

The paper quoted Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary-General Asem Ghosheh as saying that the practice was only temporary and would last for a few days.

The paper also quoted Ghosheh as appealing to the public to refrain from stockpiling gas cylinders as such a move, he said, constituted a source of great danger. He also assured the public that sufficient gas existed in the country.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Tuesday announced the discovery of a malpractice at one of the gas cylinder distribution centres in Amman.

A statement said that a team of inspectors, grouping representatives of the Ministry of Energy, the JPRC and the Civil Defence Department (CDD), while on an inspection tour of gas cylinder distribution centers found a worker siphoning gas from a full cylinder into an apparently empty one with the obvious purpose of selling them as full gas cylinders afterwards.

The statement said that one worker at the distribution centre located at Shmeisani was caught red-handed tampering with the cylinders in the store.

The case has now been referred to the court, and no more gas cylinders will be sold to the centre in question, said the statement which declined to give the name of the culprit.

The gas cylinder episode surfaced three weeks after the new government measures of rationing gasoline went into effect.

Since Feb. 5, all private cars, estimated to number 175,000, have been running on alternate days, depending on the odd and even numbers on their licence plates.

The measure was introduced by the government with the hope of saving gasoline. The amount of fuel being used in heating government buildings has also been reduced.

Upon introducing the new rules, the government said that the measure was expected to save up to 35 per cent of the oil consumed by Jordan at a time when the country is finding it increasingly difficult to acquire crude oil from Iraqi sources.

The game of manipulation brought to trial in a debate

By Saeda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Was there really a genuine effort on the part of the media (Western and Arab) to achieve objectivity in their coverage of the Gulf war? How much of the truth did their reporting unveil? Or was the whole exercise simply a game for the manipulation of peoples' emotions, desires and fears?

Journalists representing the foreign and local media attempted, in a two-hour debate, to respond to these questions, trying to explain their points of view. The discussion, heated at times, took place Tuesday evening at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC). It began with the Arab side accusing Western journalists of not being objective and of failing to understand the Arab mind.

Ziyad Al Rifai, a professor of journalism at Yarmouk University, charged that U.S. President George Bush was censoring the media by blocking access to information. He said the American government had fears of repeating the media role during the Vietnam war, and that journalists, on the other hand, were not objecting. Rifai criticised Western journalists for not attempting to understand Arab culture which basically differed in the sort of words they chose, and how they commented on elaborated on them without really understanding the significance of these words in the Arab language and how they may differ from other languages. This, Rifai said, was attributed

to the language barrier and to the lack of professional interpreters in the country who could translate the significance of the words, not their transliterated meaning.

Mahmoud Al Shant, chief editor of Al Dustour Arabic daily newspaper, explained the effect of the cultural gap between Arabs and Westerners and voiced strong objection to the way Western media manipulated information. "Facts have been twisted in a very wicked way to justify an unjustifiable war," he said.

"Foreign journalists have a problem of conscience," he added. "Was there really a desire to go deeper to know the reason behind the bitter, frustrated and wounded attitude?"

John Dougan, ABC correspondent, explained that Arabs are not capable to look "eye for eye," and even if the Americans heard the argument they may not be convinced. "They may still have the same conclusion," he criticised the freedom of the press in Arab countries in comparison with Israel where journalists enjoy free access to information.

Correspondent Peter Humi said that Arabs were supporting Saddam Hussein only because they were frustrated because their problems have not been solved. "They have chosen the wrong leader, the wrong time at the very wrong moment."

However, the prolonged debate seemed to emphasise more, on the part of the Arabs, on the role of the media, accusing it of being shallow and the root cause of all problems.

One foreign journalist said that many Arab journalists were already working for news agencies, foreign magazines and newspapers and could give their point of view. He criticised Arab media for not having correspondents abroad, especially in the United States.

Trying to explain the position of Western media and how much people themselves are behind what may seem as a bad image rendered to the public, ABC's Donovan cited, as an example, a Palestinian whom "you feel is suffering and who is speaking the truth, and how much he longs to go back to his country. Yet, he begins shouting and threatening you with war slogans? How can you report that? For Americans it would be 'alien' and 'incomprehensible.'"

"Why don't you try to know why we are angry, why are we doing all that? Have you told your readers and listeners why?" Dr. Sima Babhous, an academician, questioned. "What is the difference between one young Arab threatening to kill you and Bush sending half a million people to kill us?"

Mustafa Hamarneh, however, concluded the discussion by portraying the whole situation on both parts: "We are being patriotic on both sides while the fundamental problem remains: how can we get to the root of all problems in the region which are threatening us? We (Arabs) are partly guilty in this aspect such as portraying this war as a crusade while it is not."

RJ resumes flights to Jeddah, Abu Dhabi

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN (J.T.) — Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, is resuming its flights to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) after a break of nearly four weeks, but the insurance surcharges imposed on RJ, as well as other airlines operating in the area would remain until the situation in the Gulf region has improved.

RJ president and chief executive officer, Husam Abu Ghazaleh, told the Jordan Times that RJ would operate a weekly flight to Abu Dhabi in the UAE as of Thursday, Feb. 21, and hopefully another flight to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia next Tuesday.

However, more flights could be arranged to the two destinations depending on the volume of passengers and also on the general situation in the region, Abu Ghazaleh said.

Before the Gulf war, RJ used to operate daily flights to the two countries but had to curtail its flights and to stop them altogether later in the light of the hostilities which broke out in the Gulf region, RJ officials noted.

According to an RJ announcement Tuesday, special teams are now working out flight schedules for RJ planes to give exact dates for further flights to the two destinations.

Ahu Ghazaleh said that RJ planes resumed their flights to Muscat in Oman on Feb. 3 at the rate of one flight a week. RJ has been flying to North African and European destinations as well as to New York despite the Gulf war.

Ahu Ghazaleh said that RJ was doing everything in its power to offer the best services to passengers and to maintain Jordan's

links with the outside world under all circumstances.

On Jan. 15 RJ announced an extra charge of JD 100 for each passenger travelling to the Gulf region and JD 167 for each passenger heading for Europe and other destinations. These extra charges, the RJ said, were imposed by insurance companies which started hiking their rates when the Gulf crisis broke out last August.

Last month, RJ suspended flights to Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Calcutta, Karachi and New Delhi also because of the insurance surcharges which made the flights very costly.

RJ has maintained services to all other stations but said that due to limited number of aircraft at its disposal it was forced in some cases to fly its passengers aboard small planes to other destinations, including New York.

The resumption of RJ flights to Saudi Arabia came close on the heels of a decision by Saudi authorities to lift a ban on Arab expatriates, including Jordanians and Palestinians working in Saudi Arabia, allowing them to return after trips abroad.

Saudi civil aviation authorities last week informed all airlines that they could fly Jordanian, Palestinian, Yemeni and Sudanese expatriates to Saudi Arabia as long as the passengers had valid return entry visas.

However, a ban on Jordanian trucks carrying produce and other goods into Saudi Arabia from Jordan remained in force. About 140,000 Jordanians used to work in Saudi Arabia before the Gulf crisis erupted in August, but many were reported to have returned to Jordan since the start of the crisis.

Islamist parliamentarians press for support of Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — The Islamist bloc at the Lower House of Parliament Monday called on all Arab and Islamic countries not taking part in the attacks against Iraq to provide the necessary facilities for those wishing to join in the fight against the U.S.-led coalition.

In a statement the bloc issued, it called for opening the door for volunteers from such countries to fight alongside their Iraqi brothers to fend off the forces of oppression and evil.

The statement said that America and its allies were launching brutal attacks against the Iraqi people, turning a deaf ear to Iraq's recent initiative in which it accepted to withdraw from Kuwait, provided that other problems in the region be addressed according to international legitimacy.

The brutal attacks on Iraq and the continuing air raids on the Iraqi people, cities and installations stand as proof of the ill-intentions and the undeclared goals of the infidel anti-Iraq coalition,

the statement said.

It criticised the Arab leaders arrayed with the Western forces for adopting the same position as the aggressors and for aborting Iraq's peaceful initiative. It added that Iraq's acceptance to withdraw from Kuwait has left no excuse for those who pronounced their neutrality in the fight or those who cited Iraq's takeover of Kuwait as a reason for joining the U.S.-led alliance.

The statement called on all countries who condemned the hostilities against Iraq, particularly Iran, to take their fighting positions beside their Iraqi brothers in defence of the dignity of the Arab and Muslim nations, and their culture, history and religion.

The statement also called on Islamic movements in the countries that have allied themselves with the U.S.-led coalition to express their anger and condemnation of the destruction of the Iraqi infrastructure, and killing of Iraqi children, women and the aged.

Ministry revives road project

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Public Works and Housing Tuesday announced a tender for the completion of the 32-kilometre Zaza-Ghor Haditha road along the eastern coast of the Dead Sea, and said that local, Arab and foreign contractors were welcome to bid.

Nearly half of the road, which is part of the highway linking the Jordan Valley with the port of Aqaba, was completed by July 1990 when work on the project stopped due to technical problems and lack of funds.

Work on the project started by the end of 1986, but since the delay in completion was due to incompetence on the part of the original contractors, the ministry decided to carry on with the project by inviting other contractors to do the job, with the cost to be footed by the original contractors, according to the terms of original contract, a ministry statement said.

The JD 17.5 million two-lane road should run along the eastern coast of the Dead Sea to link with the existing road at Ghor Safi which runs through Wadi Araba to reach Aqaba in the south.

When completed, the road would be useful for the agricultural products of the Jordan Valley to export their products.

The road would also serve as an alternative route to the existing, but longer Amman-Aqaba highway, for tourists going to Aqaba.

When first announced, the project was expected to be completed in two years.

The project was originally funded through loans from the Arab and Saudi development funds as well as the Jordanian treasury.

The ministry's statement Tuesday said that foreign contractors can be considered for the tender provided that they are in consortium with local or non-Jordanian Arab contractors.

Italians seek peace

AMMAN (Petra) — A 30-member Italian peace group, currently on a mission to Amman and Baghdad, Tuesday voiced solidarity with the Jordanian, Palestinian and Iraqi peoples, and expressed their interest in seeing a peaceful end to the Gulf war.

In a statement to the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, the delegation's head expressed hope that reason and conscience would dominate the logic of violence and the resort to military options in solving disputes.

Explaining his group's mission, the delegation's head said his group has no political, racial or religious affiliations and that their mission was mainly designed to help establish just peace.

He added that the Italian people have not declared war against Iraq and pointed out that the group would organise a peaceful march to the Italian embassy in Amman to protest the Italian involvement in the war.

Ministry of Labour plans strict measures to cut unemployment

By Mamdouh Hawamdeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Labour has embarked on practical measures designed to reduce non-Jordanian workers local job seekers in a bid to solve the problem of unemployment in the country, according to Minister Abdul Karim Al Humi.

The measures, he said, were in implementation of new directives the government which was trying to find work for job seekers in all available sectors.

Addressing a meeting with the Jordanian Labour Unions, Halim Khaddam, and the union's executive committee members, Dughmi said that 1991

would be the year for the big change of the existing situation, with more and more local workers taking the jobs still filled by foreigners in every sector.

Ministry teams would launch strict inspection tours to ensure that the non-Jordanians were being employed in jobs for which they had originally been imported and reports by these teams would serve as a basis for future renewal of work permits for all non-Jordanians in the country, Dughmi noted.

The minister warned that each non-Jordanian working illegally in the country would be asked to leave within two weeks from the date of being informed by the ministry's decision and the ministry would study means of effective measures to prevent such persons from coming back.

The ministry's Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) has been turning out batches of Jordanians who had taken training courses in a number of fields formerly shunned by Jordanians; these include hairdressing, building, dress making and others. The graduates are being given jobs in various fields with VTC support.

At the meeting with the minister, Khaddam requested that the Ministry of Labour examine the cases of employees and workers being dismissed from their jobs in various Jordanian companies and factories.

A decision was taken at the meeting that a working paper be prepared by the executive committee outlining solutions to problems facing the Jordanian workers.

GUVS asks U.N. to press for ceasefire

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A five member delegation of the General Union of Jordanian Workers (GUVS) headed by Fakhri Bilal Tuesday presented the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative Ali Atiq a memorandum addressed to the U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to make every effort to arrange ceasefire

in the Gulf and to arrange for initiating dialogue to solve regional problems capitalising on Iraq's peaceful initiative.

The memorandum called for a halt in hostilities by putting an end to the sufferings of the Palestinian people, and implementing the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The memorandum said the rejection by the American President George Bush of Iraq's recent initiative for establishing peace in the region exposed the ill intentions harboured by the U.N.-led alliance against Iraq and uncovers

the genuine dimensions of the brutal aggression against Iraq. The massing of over 500,000 troops, the buildup of the most advanced and sophisticated war machinery and the continuing air attacks on Iraq, are not aimed at liberating Kuwait and restoring international legitimacy, but rather to destroy Iraq's infrastructure and achievements with the ultimate goal of dominating the region, the memorandum said.

It noted that Jordan is suffering as a result of the economic blockade, political pressures and the Israeli threats.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

King confers Royal medal on Swiss

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has conferred a royal medal on the Swiss traveller, the late Sheikh Ibrahim Ben Abdullah, (known in the West under the name of Johan Ludwig Burkhardt) in recognition of his contributions to Middle East archaeology and history. The medal was presented to Swiss ambassador to Jordan Bernardino Scioli by Minister of Tourism Daoud Khalaf in the presence of Dr. Ghazi Bisheh, director general of the Department of Antiquities. The late Swiss scholar and traveller in the Middle East discovered the ancient Nabatean city of Petra in 1812 and made extensive tours in the Middle East region.

Jordanian peace calls receive attention

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian ambassador in Brussels, Talal Sataat Al Hassan, said Tuesday attempts being made currently to end the war in the Gulf and solve the crisis come in accordance with Jordan's call during the past months to avert the military option. In a telephone interview with Radio Jordan, Hassan said the Kingdom's call is now better understood by other countries because of the grave consequences of war on the region. The European Community, he said, was confident that Jordan has a basic role to play in any peace process and any security system in the region.

Mahfaza seeks help to students in Britain

IRBID (Petra) — Yarmouk University President Ali Mahfaza Tuesday called on presidents of British universities to use their good offices to secure the release of the Iraqi and other Arab students, who were detained in Britain for no valid reason. In several messages he sent to British university presidents Mahfaza said the British authorities have detained some Arab students attending British universities without any valid reason. He added that the detention of such students constitutes a flagrant violation of the international laws and conventions providing for the protection of civilians in times of war.

by the U.N. Security Council, for total withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

"Let me just reiterate: as far as I'm concerned there are no negotiations," Mr. Bush said. "The goals have been set out. There will be no concessions, I'm not going to give."

Mr. Bush's remarks followed a statement Tuesday that the restoration of Kuwait as a sovereign state must be the basis of any solution to the Gulf crisis.

But he also told parliament that Moscow wanted to see Iraq as a "flourishing state with territorial integrity and playing a worthy role in the world community."

The minister's comments came just after a spokesman for President Gorbachev declared that the ground offensive planned by the coalition "will not give anything."

Vladimir Ignatenko, in remarks suggesting that Moscow is coming out firmly against a land assault, said at a briefing: "When matters is not the absolute destruction, not breaking the backbone, of this country (Iraq)."

Soviets

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Bessmertnykh did not directly link setting the Gulf war with the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. But he added: "The events in the Persian Gulf give a serious impulse for quickening the tempo for solving all Middle Eastern problems. There is a change in the psychological mood."

He also reiterated the Soviet position that Israel eventually must leave the occupied territories.

The Soviet leadership sees the way to peace through coordinated efforts by other nations "doing all that is possible and impossible to put out the fire of war in the Persian Gulf and to turn to a political settlement as soon as possible."

He said Moscow did not want Iraq, with which the Soviet Union has a friendship treaty signed in 1971, to be viewed as an outcast in future regional security structures.

"This is a big and important state, whose viability is an integral part of the regional balance," he told the deputies.

French President Francois Mitterrand received a message from President Gorbachev on Monday evening which may have briefed him on the Kremlin's plan.

Mr. Mitterrand's spokesman Hubert Vendrine confirmed Tuesday that a message was handed over by Soviet Ambassador Yuri Dubinin but declined to reveal its contents.

Mr. Vendrine also said Mr. Bessmertnykh telephoned his French counterpart Roland Dumas Monday afternoon and Mr. Mitterrand had been in touch with British Prime Minister John Major.

French media Tuesday described the situation as a race between diplomacy

and war.

Throughout the crisis, France has indicated it would prefer a negotiated solution to outright military defeat of Iraq, the option believed favoured by the United States and Britain.

When Moscow's initiative was announced on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Daniel Bernard drew attention to previous peace bids by Mr. Mitterrand.

In common with reported elements of Mr. Gorbachev's plan, Mr. Mitterrand on Jan. 14 proposed that Iraq declare its readiness to leave Kuwait, set a specific and detailed timetable for withdrawal and make an immediate start on a rapid and massive pullout.

Mr. Mitterrand also proposed that Iraq be given a guarantee of non-aggression by the allies and that the United Nations contribute actively to resolving the other problems of the region, notably the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher expressed support Tuesday for a strong Soviet role in the post-war Gulf region.

Rejecting doubts about Moscow's objectives in seeking a Gulf peace settlement, Mr. Genscher said it had a right to be an equal partner in shaping a new world order.

Mr. Genscher said in a radio interview that Moscow's peace plan showed the Kremlin wanted to play an important role in the Gulf region after the war ended.

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Plan has to work

NOW THAT the salient features of the Soviet peace plan have more or less been made public, it should be relatively easy to imagine the awesome national responsibility for the Iraqi leadership in accepting or rejecting the initiative. To reject it outright would necessarily incur dangers and above all be a big gamble over the fate of the ground war projected to start at any time now. To accept it may give cause for belief that the whole military showdown is totally unnecessary. But such a limited interpretation is valid only on the surface.

A deeper analysis of the military standoff in the Gulf war would reveal that Baghdad has already achieved many of its and the Arab World's objectives. Having stood up to the combined allied forces for over a month in spite of the biggest aerial and missile bombardment the world has ever witnessed, Iraq has, in effect, instilled in the Arab peoples a renewed sense of self-confidence that had been missing from our psyche for much of our contemporary history. After all, it was the U.S., Britain and France that Iraq was fighting throughout the past five weeks and that in itself is no small military or strategic achievement. An Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait cannot also be construed as a military or political defeat since Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has contemplated such a withdrawal right from the outset when he began to withdraw his troops immediately after the invasion on Aug. 2 of last year but stopped short of pursuing it when the coalition countries heightened their belligerency against him and his country.

Iraq's Aug. 12 peace initiative also talks about an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait provided that were solutions for other issues, notably the Palestinian problem. Against this backdrop, an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait per se is something that Baghdad was willing to consider all along within an appropriate peace framework.

The biggest gain for Iraq, however, has been its ability to shake up the Arab World from its slumber and unveil the true nature and role of the various Arab and non-Arab regimes. In this sense, the Gulf war that Iraq has fought with brilliance and honour, albeit with much suffering to its people, will serve as a catalyst for a new Arab renaissance, something that His Majesty King Hussein alluded to when he visited the 12th Royal Mechanised Division on Monday.

At the same time, the allied forces cannot be viewed as having attained their paramount objective which is to destroy Iraq's military might and topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's regime. The military standoff in the Gulf theatre has thus been fairly reflected in the peace formula being administered to the antagonists.

But while one party subjected to the war, namely Iraq, appeared headed towards accepting the Soviet proposals, others continued to sound as obstinate and arrogant as ever before. If U.S. President George Bush's statement yesterday is meant to serve as a rejection of Mr. Gorbachev's plan, then those who have done their best to give peace a chance will have no option but to organise themselves into a new, solid anti-war camp.

It is our sincere hope that further alienation from the cause of peace will not be necessary and that all will give the Soviet plan the opportunity to succeed.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I ARABIC daily Tuesday launches a bitter attack on France and the other European nations for succumbing to Washington's desires and will, and reverting to their old colonial concepts in their dealings with Third World nations. The first few days of the Gulf war helped to remove the masks from the faces of France and the other Europeans, exposing their intentions and displaying them as mere agents for the United States, said the paper. France in particular has thought of reviving its old colonial dreams; and therefore the Arabs should not lean on these nations politically or militarily from now on, the paper said. Indeed, the ugly French colonialism suddenly woke up; and through the Gulf war, the French seem intent on settling old scores to cover for the ignominious defeats dealt to them in Algeria and in Lebanon among other places of the Arab World, the paper continued. It seems that there is a strong rivalry between the United States, France and Britain to transform this aggression into the worst military terrorist onslaught on the Arabs by way of killing their children and obliterating their places of worship and demolishing their economic and cultural infrastructures, said the paper. Al Ra'i said that there is no doubt that the war criminals: Bush, Mitterrand, and Major are gloating over the bloodshed, and over the consequences of their raids on Iraqi people. It said that out of hatred these colonial powers are pursuing their aggression on the Arab country. But, it noted, that the Arabs and Muslims everywhere know how to retaliate and how to deal with the colonialists and abort their criminal actions.

The Arabs were shocked by the perestroika in the Soviet Union because it entailed great harm to the Palestinians since it paved the way for the migration of hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews, says a columnist in Al Ra'i daily Tuesday. Bader Abdul Haq notes that the perestroika brought about accusations levelled at the Soviet leadership and its policies, but deep down the Arabs at large had harboured hope that the Russian people will preserve a minimum level of moral support for the Arabs and their just causes despite the setback in bilateral relations. The writer notes that the former Soviet foreign minister has exposed himself by placing his country's interests under the mercy of the Western powers and the world Zionism, something which prompted the Arab countries to think that Moscow is in need of a new positive policy that would safeguard the long historic ties of friendship between the Arab and Soviet nations. By coming up with the new initiative to solve the Gulf conflict, the Soviet Union has thus proved that it wants a comeback, and retain its international prestige and status as a superpower, Abdul Haq notes. He says that by accepting the Iraqi initiative and by paving the ground for peace in the Gulf-Moscow was motivated also by the military which wields a great power in Soviet affairs and which is helping the nation to stand up again in the face of increasing Western influences that mean harm to the Soviet Union as well as the other countries of the world.

Ecopolitical Forum

The economic fallout of the Gulf war

The present war of destruction and genocide waged against Iraq by the Americans and financed by Arab petrodollars will leave scars on the face of the world economy. The question is only how deep and ugly these scars will be.

War means, literally, massive burning of goods and services. When we talk about a country suffering from a trade deficit or losing a certain export market, this is not a real loss to the world economy; it only means that something was lost by one country, say the United States, to another, say Japan or South Korea. But war means something totally different: the world economy loses the burnt goods and services. So it involves a net human loss.

It is true that countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait will pay, or are paying for, these burnt goods and services because they are financing the war and they will still buy from the West goods and services to replace the burnt ones. While this may not leave the West less better off, it will leave other countries much worse off.

After the eruption of the Gulf crisis last August, the American economy had teetered on the verge of recession until it slid into it, primarily due to the gloom which blackened business outlook and dented the confidence of consumers who consequently cut down their spending. The present war has added to this mess in a way which heralds the deepening of the recession. Given the weight of the American economy, any recession in USA transmits negative impacts into the world economy in various forms and through different avenues. It is only short and limited war that may make

its global adverse effects on world economies manageable. Up until now, all signs indicate that the present war will be far from that.

The fallout of the war has hit the Saudi economy. It has been reported that, due to the war, the Saudi budget deficit for 1990 soared to at least \$15 billion against a projected figure of \$7 billion. Saudi Arabia has already spent or committed about \$48 billion as a result of the conflict while its windfall profit from higher oil prices reached some \$15 billion.

The crucial point is that Saudi Arabia managed during the last two to three decades to buy friendships and alliances on the level of individuals, groups, parties organisations and countries by means of aid and cash handouts which served thus to stabilise and propel its foreign policy. In the domestic field, massive public spending on all sorts of economic and social infrastructure and a similarly generous programme of transfers and favours served to buy and appease businessmen, the average Saudis and expatriates and thus stabilised the domestic policies. With the war consuming oil revenues and even tying up future revenues, as evidenced by the external borrowing initiated by the Saudis last week, the fallout from the present war and its aftermath threaten the stability of the entire Saudi regime.

The war wrought a sadder story to Kuwait and its economy. In their private talks, the Kuwaitis discreetly complain that the

Americans have stripped them of huge funds and they are fearful that this process will continue until they are completely robbed out. And they will get back not only a scorched Kuwait but a nightmare as well. Somebody will have to pay, someday, for the Iraqi blood that is being shed and much more of which will be shed if war goes Mr. Bush's way right to the end. At a certain point in the future, Arab youths of today will find out that the arrogance and audacity of Kuwaitis were responsible for the flare of the Iraq-Kuwaiti conflict into the violent form it took on Aug. 2, which in turn invited the present war. It is not difficult to imagine the sort of life the Kuwaitis will lead while being wanted by Iraqis and Arab nationalists under charges of murder in collaboration with the Americans (other than shielding eternally collaboration with the Americans which is an even worse option). The Saudis themselves were not happy with the way Kuwaitis handled the conflict before Aug. 2 and probably after it.

But all this is the talk of long-term repercussions which politicians of today tend to ignore because they are interested only in immediate and short term results which, if unfavourable, might also be concealed the way American military is blacking out the atrocities and details of the present war. When longer term ramifications arrive, Mr. Bush, for example, shall have retired or died leaving them to be tackled by his successors. Therefore, he can go on waging his highly and uniquely personalised war in cold blood and with a very "clear" American conscience.

How Western media is contributing to the campaign of 'lies', 'half-truths' and 'disinformation' by the U.S.-led coalition in the Gulf

A goat even if it flew

By Mureed Hamad

NEVER in the history of human conflict have so few lied so much to so many, to modify slightly the famous words of Winston Churchill. As chief editor and head of English news at Jordan Television, I always looked up to the Western media as a living example of the basic freedoms guaranteeing the right of the people to know the "truth". However, the events in the Gulf have distorted that image, whether held by myself, my colleagues or the average layman in the region.

When the Gulf crisis began I met dozens of Western journalists, putting on their Rambo hats and looking forward to the bloodshed to cover. Now that the blood is being shed, we see the Western media being driven into believing "hock images" rather than true facts. Despite the loss of substantial amount of civilian life in Iraq, it seems to me that the Gulf war's biggest victims have been truth and justice. It was amazingly inconceivable that so few people would go to such great lengths to justify the killing of thousands, and then try to add a cover of legitimacy to avoid admitting a mistake.

I could not help but cry as I watched on our satellite feed (much different than the tame edited-for-public footage) an endless stream of mutilated, burnt, charred and even dehydrated bodies being brought up from Baghdad's Al Amiriyah bomb shelter. I saw stunned rescue teams unable to deal with, let alone carry, the mixture of flesh, blood, cement and metal.

A day after the massacre both the U.S. and British spokesmen, supported later by their Saudi echo, said they were unaware of civilian casualties, and that if there were any such casualties then

Saddam Hussein was to blame for it.

Pictures from Baghdad were appalling, and the allies had to cut prospects of a public opinion backlash by launching a "lies" campaign that fits harmoniously with their slander campaign against the Iraqi president.

First the U.S. military spokesman in Saudi Arabia began assuring reporters that the shelter was a military "bunker" and that it was a legitimate target — but he could not explain the presence of women and children in the so-called "bunker".

The spokesman said the "bunker" was the most active command and control centre in Baghdad — but he could not explain why the U.S. command had to wait a whole month to bomb it.

The spokesman said that the "bunker" was watched closely by satellite for two weeks and that there was heavy movement of Iraqi military personnel in and out of the "bunker" — but he could not explain why this movement had stopped, how the civilians got in, and why the satellite hadn't seen them.

The spokesman said electronic communication signals were coming out of the "bunker" and that its roof was painted for camouflage — but Western reporters at the scene said they saw no signs at all that there were any electronic systems, or aerials, or a camouflaged roof for that matter.

Then came the two lies that added insult to injury. The U.S. spokesman said he had "credible" evidence that Iraq was using its own people as human shields. A few minutes later the Saudi spokesman, trying to defend the American crime, said there were no air raid sirens, so why were the civilians in the shelter? He

somehow forgot that when a city is bombed around the clock people would always sleep in shelters.

Contradiction came from Washington. In a Pentagon press briefing, a military intelligence officer said the "bunker" was built as a bomb shelter during the Iraq-Iran war, and was later used as a military headquarters. However, he still could not explain why it was used again as a bomb shelter and why U.S. intelligence was unable to discover this fact.

All evidence leads us to believe one of two theories. Either the U.S. intelligence was not so "intelligent" after all, or the Iraqis are so super that they knew exactly when the Stealth bombers were going to hit the "bunker," removed all electronic evidence, repaired the roof, dismantled all antennas, removed all military personnel, rounded up a thousand people at gun point, drove them to the "bunker," sealed the door and waited for the "smart bombs." Quite a scenario.

The events of the past month prove my first theory and more. Hours after the war began, President Bush and his commanders said Iraq's military power was "decimated." Three days into the air campaign General Schwarzkopf realised that he was attacking decoys and heaps of plastic. Ten days into the campaign the U.S. military said they "may" have been hitting decoys. Twenty-five days into the campaign and 60,000 sorties later, the U.S. said there were still "thousands" of targets to attack.

Another embarrassment pitted the British when Iraq said Tornado jets bombing a bridge in Falluja attacked civilian residential areas killing over 120 people in an open market. Britain immediately denied the

"claimed attack." Its spokesman in Saudi Arabia assured reporters that British Tornados did not raid any bridges on that day. More horror came on the satellite feed from Falluja, distinctly showing demolished apartment blocks and the flattened market. After 48 hours came a brief statement from the British command in Saudi Arabia saying Tornado jets did carry out the raid and that "one" missile veered off course. The statement did not end; it said the command was not aware of any civilian casualties. End of affair, no questions, no answers, and definitely no truth.

The second biggest hoax of the war was at Khafji. The U.S. spokesman said U.S. marines and marine jets had repelled two Iraqi advances on the city — but he could not explain why the third advance was not challenged.

He said the U.S. was not involved in the battle to retake Khafji but — he could not explain why U.S. marines were shown on television shelling Khafji while their Cobra helicopters fired missiles into the Iraqi-held city.

The U.S. spokesman could not explain that to pool reports, saying U.S. troops allowed the Iraqi tanks to come in after they saw their turrets pointing backwards, a sign of surrender.

He also could not explain how a few hundred Iraqis could occupy allied front positions despite allied superiority in the area, heavy fortifications, 17 satellites, round-the-clock surveillance, reconnaissance flights, electronic monitoring technology, etc.

How, where and why? Ten days later an Iraqi soldier surrendered and says he was one of the people who escorted the woman soldier from Khafji to Basra. We are then told that she went missing along with another male specialist, who is definitely in Iraqi hands now. So, does this mean that POWs were taken from Khafji or that the two POWs in question have somehow reached the "evacuated" city where they were captured?

While the U.S. stressed that no POWs were taken, I spoke to an eye witness who swears that scores of American, Saudi and Qatari soldiers were taken from Khafji. He knows so because his brother (a Jordanian national who served in the Qatari army and who was captured along with those POWs) told him when he visited him somewhere in Iraq that most of the allied POWs were captured in the Khafji Beach Hotel.

More lies came from the U.S. in justifying the bombing of Jordanian tankers ferrying petrol from Iraq (as permitted by the United Nations as part of a special arrangement for Jordan). The U.S. spokesman said the trucks were carrying Scud missile parts to Iraq, as claimed by the Saudi press — but he could not explain why all the attacked trucks were heading from Iraq to Jordan. Nor could he explain how an F-15 pilot would be able to find out whether the tankers were carrying weapons or not. Nor could he explain why civilian cars and buses were constantly attacked on the Baghdad-Amman highway. And again I have an eyewitness who says that after their bus was attacked with two missiles, the pilot returned to the fleeing passengers, who survived the blasts. Nearly 50 people were killed in that par-

ticular incident. Why does it seem that someone in Washington or Saudi Arabia knows all the facts that the others do not, and has convincing answers to all those questions. How can someone with so much impunity convince me that he or the bomber pilot knows exactly what is inside the truck, bus, car, or "bunker" under attack?

These are some of the countless lies that went unchallenged to contribute to the Western civilisation and its credibility in the area and the world at large. I think it is time for the West to wake up before it is too late.

We in Jordan have always feared the conflict to come and warned of its consequences on all parties. Our peace overtures have been portrayed as rejecting the international will. We know that peace was possible without spilling a drop of blood. We also believe that the world has been led in preparation for K-day.

The lies of the past are being complemented by more lies to hide the true intentions of the war in the Gulf. Many believe that the killing of civilians is a deliberate policy to pressure the Iraqi people into killing or revolting against Saddam Hussein, thus ending the war before the most dreaded ground battle begins. In the meantime the lies will continue, and the allied stubbornness in dealing with what they call irrefutable, credible and clear evidence reminds me of an Arabic tale of stubbornness.

Two men were arguing about an object in the field. One man stressed that it was a goat. The other insisted that it was a bird. While their heated debate continued the object took flight. "You see it is flying," said the first man. "No," said the second man stubbornly, "it is a goat even if it flew."

LETTERS

Clarification

To the Editor:

I wish to refer to the article published in the 19th February issue of the Jordan Times under the heading "Pakistan and Turkey stop ..." in which Mr. Arafat Hijazi, member of the Palestinian delegation is reported to have said that the Turkish Embassy had declined to issue visas to the Palestinian members of the delegation.

I would like to inform you that this report is untrue. The fact is that the diplomatic passport of His Eminence Sheikh Abdul Hamid Al Sayeh and other members of the delegation were presented to the embassy on Feb. 18. In order to issue gratis visas, the embassy requested an official letter, indicating the names of the delegation as is the procedure in the case of an official delegation. This was not done and the passports were not returned to the embassy for the visas.

I would like to reiterate that the embassy is more than ready to issue visas to members of the Palestinian delegation.

Mustafa Vardar,
Charge d'Affaires,
Turkish Embassy.

God is greater

To the Editor:

We are all impressed very much with the technology and civilisation of the West. We have every reason to be. They are proving themselves to us, more and more everyday. Their surgical bombing is fantastic, very precise, very decisive. They make no mistakes... No mistakes indeed. When you hit museums, hospitals, nurseries and shelters so skillfully you make people miserable; these miserable people start hating Saddam Hussein. When they

start hating Saddam they start loving Mr. Bush, Mr. Baker, Mr. Major, Mrs. Thatcher, Monsieur Mitterrand, H.M. King Fahd...

Or is it the other way around? That's bothering the Western allies: When you hear BBC World Service you find out they don't give a damn about innocent civilians... They are worried if this last tragedy would make Saddam Hussein more popular, is he going to use it as a propaganda tool? But then they say if he hadn't entered Kuwait, all these innocent people would have lived and all the rubbish we're used to hear... They should, by now, know better than that. This man loves his country, loves his people and he is fighting not only for his people, but he is fighting the evil in this world. He is fighting for the good and pure Arabs, he is fighting for all the good and pure people of the whole world. He doesn't need the propaganda of the shelter victims to be popular. He just wants to stop the fears of these people once and for all. He is going to be understood, he is going to be loved more and more each day. He is going to win everybody's heart in the world except those who think themselves to be chosen. Yes, they were chosen once upon a time, but then God Himself cursed them for they caused corruption on Earth. Since then they are cursed and they know it very well through their own Holy book. And they know also very well that their end will come soon. So now they trying to manipulate God. As they underestimate everybody, they underestimate God. God is greater.

Gulchin Lambaz,
Amman.

A killing order

To the Editor:

The indiscriminate shelling of a public shelter in Baghdad Wednesday, exposes the U.S. malintentions, and refutes all the allegations and justifications the U.S.-led alliance had used to

attack Iraq. The bombing of civilians and the resulting casualties and the destruction of the Iraqi infrastructure stand as a clear evidence of the brutality of such powers, which claim to be the pioneers of democracy and public freedoms. These irresponsible, ruthless and cowardly acts show how desperate the USA and its allies are following the failure of their month-long air raids to destroy the Iraqi military power, which is almost intact. The shelling, which was carried out under the pretext of implementing the United Nations Security Council resolutions, to drive Iraq out of Kuwait has gone beyond the limits allowed by resolution 678, which authorized the international community to use the necessary means to drive Iraq out of Kuwait. Therefore the reasons they cited for their hostilities are no longer valid, because instead of getting Iraq out of Kuwait, they are destroying the Iraqi people, culture and civilisation, for no reason except to satisfy their lust for blood, petrol, Arab wealth and domination of the Third World through what they have termed "a new world order." What kind of an order is that which the U.S. and British killers are advocating? Is it an order that allows the confiscation of international will, raping of international legitimacy and destroying a member state of the United Nations? Is it an order that allows the barbarians of today to kill civilian populations, mainly women and children under the pretext of applying international legitimacy? Does this new world order allow the use of weapons of massive destruction against civilian population, rather than providing protection to them in times of war, in line with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and international charters? If this is the new world order America is trying to enforce in the region, then we can say from the very outset that it is not the world order that people in our region dreams of achieving. It is not the order that suits people in this part of the world. Certainly, a world order proposed and preached by a killer can not serve as a basis for achieving peace and justice based on respect of all human beings and human dignity.

J. Azzeih,
Amman.

Gorbachev adds new doubt to war timing

By Jim Wolf
Reuters



Mikhail Gorbachev

WASHINGTON — The Gulf tides are right for an amphibious landing. The next few nights are moonless — well-suited to heighten the allied advantage over Iraq in high-tech night-fighting gear.

U.S. and allied forces are said to be as ready as they ever will be to launch what could be the largest land battle since World War II.

And some experts say they could lose their edge if the offensive were delayed for a week or more because favourable weather will have eroded by then.

But Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev added a new twist on Monday that could affect whether and when the troops are ordered into action — an element that may be irksome to President George Bush.

With U.S.-led forces poised to attack Iraqi troops in Kuwait, Gorbachev gave new proposals to Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to head off the looming ground war. Details were not immediately disclosed, but a Soviet spokesman said Moscow expected a "reply without delay."

The White House quickly made clear on Monday that its hopes for forcing Iraq from Kuwait rested on war — and that it was doubtful the Soviet peace plan would avert the ground phase.

"All of our hopes at this point are on the conflict — in the air and on the ground in terms of pushing Iraq out of Kuwait," Spokesman Martin Fitzwater said in Kennebunkport, Maine, where Bush was spending a holiday weekend.

Asked whether the timing of a land offensive might be delayed to see where the Soviet plan leads, Fitzwater said: "I wouldn't make any assumptions."

The Gorbachev proposal left Bush with a series of delicate problems. One of these is avoiding an appearance of rushing into a potentially bloody battle when a diplomatic option was available.

Against this and other considerations, including concern for Soviet support, Bush must balance a host of military and strategic considerations.

One is that the U.S. and allied troops, who have been streaming north towards the Saudi-Kuwaiti border in recent days, could be jarred and left off balance by the delay.

Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. defence secretary from 1975 to

1977, said it was very difficult to maintain a state of top readiness indefinitely.

"You can lean forward in the trench only so long, and at some point you have either have to go forward or ease back somewhat," he said in an interview on Cable News Network.

Bush also may want the land battle sooner rather than later to avoid an outcome that might leave President Saddam Hussein in power, with the potential to rebuild his forces in a matter of years.

Though Saddam's ouster is not one of Bush's uppermost declared goals, the administration's strategy would not be entirely fulfilled if he managed to stay on, U.S. officials and lawmakers have acknowledged.

"I would say that there is a very strong feeling that Saddam Hussein's leadership is going to make it very, very difficult to negotiate or to see safety in the Middle East following this war," said Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Allied commanders said last Friday they were close to a key objective, destruction of all of Iraq's front-line armour. That would pave the way for allied battle plans emphasising speed, manoeuvring ability and high-technology weapons.

Other factors driving the possibility of an early offensive are the approach of the Saudi summer in March, with its scorching heat and blinding sandstorms that may interfere with high-technology weapons, and the importance of ending the conflict by the time Muslim pilgrims journey to Mecca in June.

Western diplomats have warned that the Hajj, as the journey of more than two million Muslim pilgrims is known, would be difficult for Saudi Arabia to manage if the war were still continuing.

Aziz

(Continued from page 1)

"... The surprises will be unleashed and then it will be impossible to stop a series of horrible surprises," he said.

Iraq has previously threatened to use chemical weapons in the war. So far its missiles aimed at Israel and Saudi Arabia have been armed with conventional explosives.

Baghdad Radio said President Saddam chaired a meeting of top aides Tuesday at which the agricultural situation in the country was discussed, the radio reported. Mr. Aziz did not attend the meeting.

The radio said in a brief report that Agriculture Minister Abdul Wahab Al Sabbagh was among those present. Some members of

the ruling Revolutionary Command Council also attended, it said.

At the United Nations, Soviet Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov said Tuesday he expected the Iraqi foreign minister to return to Moscow on Wednesday and was hoping "for a positive reply" on the Soviet initiative.

"We expect the arrival of Mr. Tariq Aziz in Moscow tomorrow and we are looking forward, I would say, for the positive reply of the Iraqi government," Mr. Vorontsov told reporters after briefing the U.N. Security Council.

Jordan's image in the Western media: wrong themes that have to go

By Serene Halasa

THE WESTERN media habitually loves themes. First, it does everything possible to construct them. Then, it is a never-ending process to harp on them.

For one reason or another, the theme in which Jordan has been held captive by the Western media for the past six and a half months is one which portrays it as a weak Kingdom, sandwiched between an enemy neighbour, Israel, and an old aggressive ally, Iraq.

Ever since the Gulf crisis erupted on Aug. 2, Jordan has been made to be part of one or more of basically two sub themes. The first portrays Jordan as taking a pro-Iraqi stand in order to satisfy a large Palestinian majority, and the various Jordanian fundamentalist movements. The second is that the Kingdom has been pressured by the Iraqi government to take this position.

One vivid example of the way Jordan is depicted in the Western media those days is an article which appeared in last week's Newsweek magazine,

entitled "All unquiet on the western front, Saddam is trying to draw Jordan into the conflict." In that article, the writer, Christopher Dickey, portrays Jordan as a helpless little kingdom, and its monarch, as a leader pressured from within by certain groups and "influential fundamentalist leaders," who "fervently support Saddam."

Well, I think, I speak on behalf of a majority of Jordanians when I say that the kind of pressure Jordan is under is not one from within, but an external one. This external pressure exerted on Jordan, is unlike the one Dickey describes in his article as coming from Iraq, but one coming from another nation, the United States of America. Mr. Dickey might know this, although he does not say it in his article.

The U.S., he might recall, has exerted all kinds of pressure on Jordan since the onset of the crisis in order to bring the Kingdom and its monarch in the anti-Iraqi camp. Pressures ranged from political to economic, to other forms. For example, when the United Nations issued a resolution en-

forcing a trade embargo and sanctions against Iraq, Jordan indirectly fell victim to this resolution. American warships stationed near the Tiran Straits in the Red Sea, claiming to monitor Jordan's compliance with the U.N. mandate, kept turning back, and harassing Jordan-bound vessels. This enforcement, further hampered the already weakened Jordanian economy. Although the American administration admitted more than once Jordan's compliance with the U.N. resolutions, the harassment never stopped.

Pressure by the U.S. on Jordan mounted after the start of the Gulf war on Jan. 17. Civilian cars, and oil tankers were targeted on the only civilian highway linking Jordan with Iraq killing many Jordanian citizens. The American administration, in an effort to justify these attacks on Jordan, claimed that Jordan was violating the U.N. embargo, disregarding the fact that Jordan had made an arrangement with the U.N. sanctions committee to import oil from Iraq, until another alternative source was found. Jordan has now started to import oil from Syria, but

unfortunately the bombing of civilian targets has not ceased.

When the King "spoke with conviction about the suffering of the Iraqi people, but failed to mention either Kuwait or Saddam Hussein," the United States "responded with a review of aid to Jordan and the threat of a possible cut." This new pressure, exerted by the U.S. on the Kingdom of Jordan for its perceived pro-Iraqi stand, proves that the country trying to draw Jordan into the conflict is not Iraq, but is the United States. When the King made his speech, he made it with a deep conviction stemming from the conscience of an Arab leader who does not look kindly upon the suffering and targeting of Arab people, and the destruction of a fellow Arab country. Mr. Dickey might want to know that the only pressure that His Majesty was under, is one reflecting his duty as a world leader, seeking peace, and not the destruction of this region.

"For the moment the King feels no direct pressure from Iraq to enter the fight," None at all," he says," writes Mr. Dickey in his article in an apparent contradiction to the

thrust of his article, which is that Jordan is pressured by Iraq to enter the war.

"Militarily, Jordan's best defence may be the allied bombers clearing Iraq's western desert of everything that moves," Mr. Dickey also writes in his article. Well again I think I speak on behalf of many Jordanians when I say that we Jordanians would rather ourselves fight and defend our country than have U.S. planes bombing our civilians in order to protect us from Iraq.

In the article, Mr. Dickey claims that Jordan "is the closest front Saddam has to Israel, which he desperately hopes to draw into the conflict." Again I would like to remind Mr. Dickey that facts speak louder than words. I believe that Iraq has done a pretty good job so far. It has repeatedly and successfully launched missile attacks against Israel without having to cross Jordanian territories. But if his argument extends further to include an awaited Israeli retaliation against the multiple Iraqi missile attacks on its ter-

ritories, through Jordanian soil or air space, then I believe that it is time he started looking at this conflict with a broader and more in depth look.

Mr. Dickey, might want to think that, if the nations which are today forming an alliance against a so-called Iraqi aggression, worked with the same enthusiasm to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict, all this bloodshed would have been avoided, and the continuous Iraqi attacks on the Jewish state would have been totally unnecessary.

In the U.S., Americans pride themselves on having a democracy, but when another world country exercises a democracy that does not see eye to eye with their kind of democracy, they automatically brandish it as either a weak democracy or an undemocratic democracy. All we Arabs demand of the foreign media in our region today, is to give a clear, factual picture of what is really going on and to place some more effort in trying to understand this part of the world and its people.

The writer is on the staff of the Jordan Times.

By Jack Redden
Reuters

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — The strains in Israeli-American relations obscured by the Gulf crisis have re-emerged, showing the two countries in basic disagreement over solving the Palestinian problem.

The issue was at the heart of their relations before Iraq invaded Kuwait last Aug. 2. It resurfaced after an attack on U.S. policy last week by Israeli Ambassador to Washington Zelman Shoval, followed immediately by a stinging American rebuttal.

The argument was over Washington's refusal to release \$400 million in loan guarantees until Israel provides more details of its plans for settling Israelis on occupied land. But that it is only a small part of the overall dispute.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir last year foiled U.S. efforts to end the conflict over the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip but Washington has promised to return to the issue after the Gulf war.

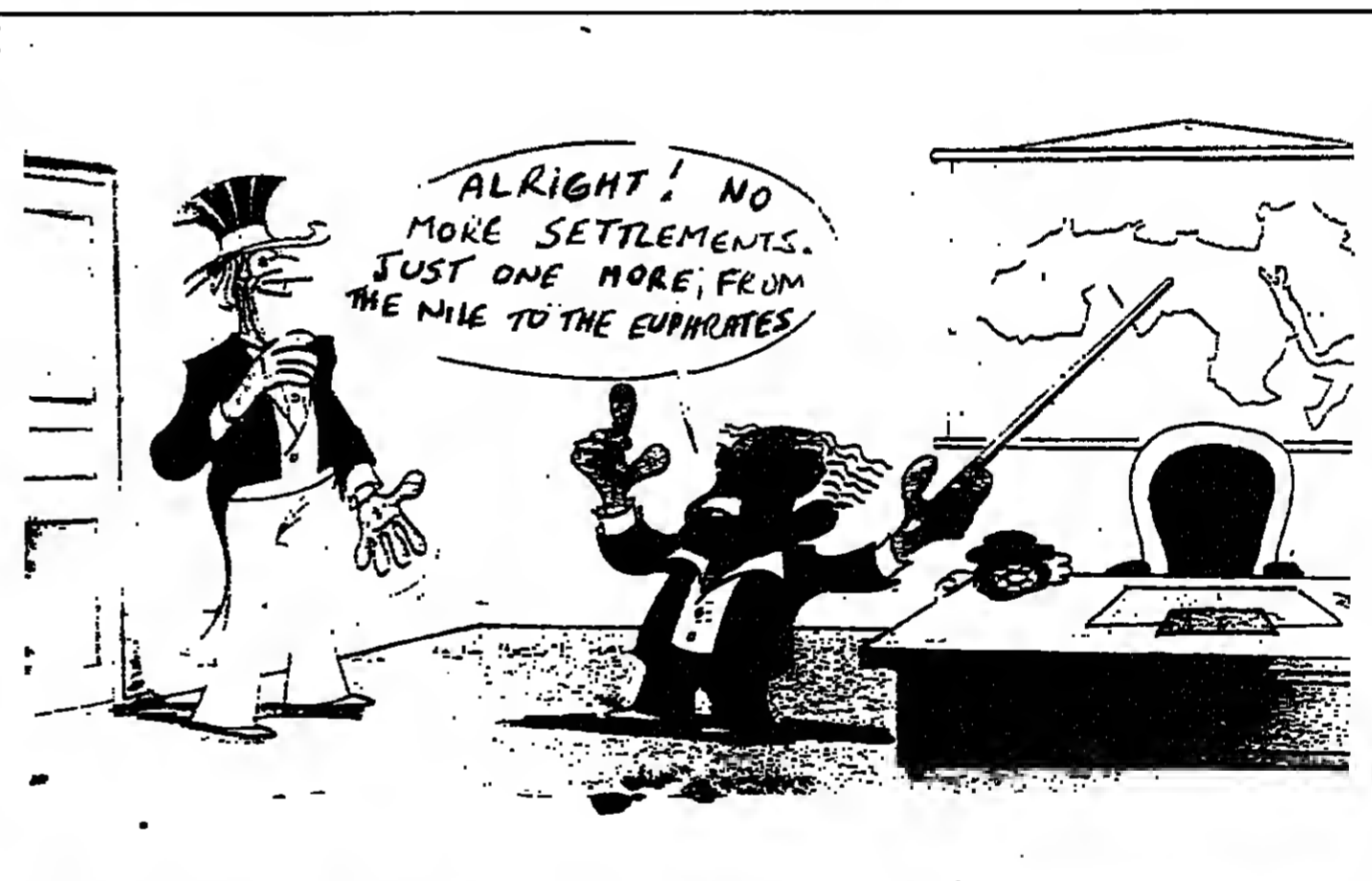
In anticipation, Shamir's government has been adopting hardline positions that will complicate any peace effort.

This month Shamir expanded his ruling coalition by adding the two-man Moledet Party, an openly anti-Arab party considered the most extreme in parliament.

While the United States talks about arrangements for regional security Shamir talks about new understanding of Israel's distrust of its neighbours and need to remain strong.

Last Friday, Shamir said he wanted an Israel stretching from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River — incorporating the occupied lands where 1.75

Israel-U.S. dispute over Palestinians re-emerges



million Palestinians have been fighting for independence for the past 38 months.

"This is my personal belief and my dream," Shamir said of his position in peace talks.

Opposition members of parliament said last week the gov-

ernment planned to build 12,000 new homes in the West Bank in the next three years. They said 1,000 mobile homes would be moved into the area.

It would add at least 50,000 Israelis to the West Bank and that does not include a vast

building programme in Arab East Jerusalem, captured in the same 1967 war as the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Most countries including the United States do not recognise the annexation of East Jerusalem.

Israeli settlement in the occu-

pied territories goes to the heart of the disagreement with Washington. The latest building plans formed the backdrop for last week's diplomatic explosion.

Washington, which considers settlement in the territories an obstacle to peace, had deman-

ded details of housing plans before giving the \$400 million loan guarantees to house Soviet Jewish immigrants.

Israeli spending in the occupied territories is hard to unravel, appearing in items such as military construction that provides roads or subsidies to farmers. A year ago government money was secretly channeled to buy Christian property in Jerusalem's old city.

The credibility of Israeli information, which Washington already appeared to doubt, was not helped by last week's revelation of housing plans not disclosed even to the Israeli public.

Israel's apparent readiness to battle Washington could not come at a worse time for the Jewish state. Last month it suggested the United States provide \$10 billion in aid to settle the million Soviet immigrants expected by 1993.

Shoval demanded Washington compensate Israel for Gulf war losses, such as the collapse of tourism and higher oil prices. He complained Israel has "not received one cent of aid."

That must have touched a raw nerve in a capital risking lives and spending billions of dollars to fight Israel's most formidable Arab enemy, Washington defends Israeli cities with U.S.-manned Patriot missile and gives annual grants of \$3 billion.

Perhaps Israel was convinced the international praise it won by not retaliating for Iraqi missile attacks — which could have disrupted the U.S.-led coalition in the Gulf — guaranteed a strong bargaining position after the war.

But Israeli anxiety over the \$400 million in loans shows that Shamir's government understands the extent of U.S. financial leverage and fears Washington will use it.

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Jordan Times

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Sampdoria aiming high

By Reuter

SAMPDORIA. The new clear leaders of the Italian soccer first division, have set their sights high for the rest of the season.

The Genoa team face a hectic few weeks of league, Italian Cup and European Cup Winners' Cup matches, but striker Roberto Mancini believes they can ride it out.

Speaking before Sampdoria's Italian Cup quarter-final second-leg tie against Torino Tuesday, Mancini said:

"You could say that being a mixture side means that we ought to be able to abandon one competition and concentrate on another."

"But Sampdoria are not made like that, we want to win everything, league title, Cup Winners' Cup and Italian Cup."

Sampdoria coach Vujadin Boskov, whose team lost their first-leg tie 1-0, was expected to wait until shortly before kick-off before naming his team after a string of injuries in Sunday's 1-0 home win against Juventus.

Juventus hope to atone for that defeat in their quarter-final tie at home against Roma Wednesday. Juventus will be defending a 1-1 scoreline from the first leg.

AC Milan, Sampdoria's championship rivals, can afford the luxury of fielding a reserve side in their quarter-final tie against Bari Wednesday. AC Milan defend a 1-0 lead at their own San Siro Stadium.

Milan coach Arrigo Sacchi will rest his Dutch trio, Frank Rijkaard, Ruud Gullit and Marco Van Basten, five other first team players plus captain Franco Baresi will also have the day off.

Buresi dislocated his shoulder in Sunday's 3-1 win over Lazio and could be out for more than two weeks, making him a doubtful starter for AC Milan's European Cup home tie against Marseille on March 6.

Napoli travel to Bologna for Wednesday's fourth quarter-final, one goal down and once again unsettled by the long-running saga surrounding captain Diego Maradona. The Argentine said this week he would soon retire from the game.

French soccer, staggering from crisis to crisis, has been hit by a third threatened strike in quick succession. Players at first division Nantes said they may refuse to take to the pitch unless salary arrears are paid.

The players said the club, slipping fast towards the relegation zone, has not paid them since November.

Recently, a national players' strike over plans to restrict freedom of contract and a strike by Marseille over a ban on club President Bernard Tapie were threatened but later called off.

In the Netherlands, Feyenoord Rotterdam's Sjaak Troost broke his leg again in training Monday after finally recovering from a fracture on the same leg last season. The 31-year-old defender may never return on the highest soccer level.

Bottom-of-the-table Heerenveen have taken Romanian striker Rodion Camataru on loan from Belgian first division side Charleroi.

But Camataru, who has some 70 caps, will only be able to play for Heerenveen if he gets a work permit. Brazilian striker Marcus Jose Rodriguez and Soviet players Merab Jordania and Vaja Ivania have all been denied permits to play for the club since the beginning of the season.

In Spain, Atletico Madrid's Portuguese star Paulo Futre was quoted Tuesday as saying he was not interested in leaving the Spanish team despite a reported offer from Juventus.

"I am very happy in Madrid and so far I am planning to finish my career abroad with Atletico," he told the AS Sports newspaper.

"Over my possible transfer, I can't say anything because this has to be resolved between (Atletico chairman) Jesus Gil and the Italians."

"The thought of Italy doesn't keep me awake at night."

Maradona to retire this year

ROME (R) — Argentine captain Diego Maradona, under investigation for possible links with a vice-rings, says he will give up soccer and leave Naples at the end of the season.

Following recent allegations of involvement in a drugs and prostitution racket in the city, Maradona repeated on Italian television Tuesday his intention to retire from soccer at the end of the season.

"I'm going to go back to Argentina at the end of the season and I won't play again, ever, at least at a professional level."

"I'm leaving Naples because I don't want people saying to (my daughter) Dalma that her father sells drugs."

Maradona, whose contract at Italian champions Napoli expires in 1993, suggested the accusations were the result of a vendetta against him and designed to take attention off Naples' problems by focusing on his alleged misdoings.

Naples public prosecutor Vittorio Sbordone said last week Maradona was being investigated on suspicion that he may have asked for drugs and prostitutes from the Camorra, the local mafia.

The stocky midfielder said he had been framed and denied ever using drugs.

Platini to risk Cantona in crucial tie

PARIS (R) — French team boss Michel Platini indicated Monday he would play Eric Cantona in Wednesday's European Championship qualifier with Spain even though the striker has played just 47 minutes of soccer in three months.

Cantona, the "enfant terrible" of French soccer, has only just recovered from a knee injury sustained in late October and his Marseille club have sent him on only briefly as substitute in two recent league matches.

But Platini is clearly anxious to play the gifted forward in Paris alongside his club mate Jean-Pierre Papin.

That would re-mix a deadly striking partnership which has been at the heart of a French run of success during which the side has remained unbeaten for almost two years.

"The side has been in place for two years and has not been losing. My inclination is to keep it," said Platini.

"The main question was to know whether Eric had completely recovered physically. Now we are sure he has."

"From my point of view, he is 100 per cent. I am not running a big risk by playing him."

France lead Group 1 with maximum points from three matches and would take a big stride towards the European Championship finals in Sweden next year if they beat Spain.

Soviet official calls Klimova drug test a mistake

MOSCOW (AP) — A Soviet sports official said Tuesday a drug test that ice dancer figure skating champion Marina Klimova failed last week at the European Championships in Sofia, Bulgaria, "was a mistake."

Vasily Gromyko, a deputy sports minister, also said at a news conference that the test in Sofia in late January was flawed.

"The Sofia anti-doping laboratory is not accredited at the IOC Medical Commission."

"Istvan Sugar, a judge from Hungary, was appointed the head of testing commission in Sofia, but he had no official right for that," Gromyko said.

He added that a Bulgarian doctor sealed the urine sample used in the test, and said only an International Skating Union (ISU) representative is authorized for that.

"A crude violation of the confidential character of the analysis was committed in making public its result."

ISU General-Secretary Beat Haesler said on Feb. 12 that analysis of the initial urine sample from Klimova, who won the European ice dance title with husband-partner Sergei Ponomarenko, suggested steroid use.

Results of the second test were expected this week. If the second test is positive, Klimova and Ponomarenko would be stripped of their European title, won during the week-long ban from the sport, including the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville, France.

Klimova, who attended the Soviet news conference, said she "was stunned" when she heard the news.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH
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DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ J 3
♥ J 4
♦ A K Q 10 2
♣ A Q 4

WEST
♠ 8 7 6
♥ K 9 6 3
♦ 7 3
♣ 9 8 7 6 5

EAST
♠ A Q 10 9 2
♥ A Q 2
♦ 8 7 6
♣ 3 2

SOUTH
♠ K 5 4
♥ 10 8 7 5
♦ J 5 4
♣ K J 10

The bidding:
North East South West
1 ♠ 1 ♠ 1 NT Pass
3 NT Pass Pass Pass
Opening lead: Eight of ♠

One of the reasons why bridge experts mature later than chess prodigies is the fact that bridge is a partnership game. It is easier to master the pure position of chess, where you see every piece in play, than to work out what partner has in bridge. This hand is a typical case.

Suppose that, as East, you were defending against an opposing three no trump contract. Once South has shown a spade stopper, North's trick-taking power certainly merits a jump to game.

Portugal seeks convincing win over Malta

OPORTO, Portugal (R) — Portugal are anxious to make amends for their poor performance in Malta 10 days ago when they take on the tiny island nation in their return European Soccer Championship qualifying match Wednesday.

Malta, with one point taken off Finland, were unlucky not to have picked up a second as Portugal struggled to a 1-0 victory which put them top of Group 6.

Portugal's manager Artur Jorge said they needed a convincing win to recover from the psychological damage of their last two matches.

"In Greece we played well and lost and in Valletta we were disappointing, especially in the second half, and won," he said.

It took heroics from young goalkeeper Vitor Baia and a dead-ball goal from star winger Paulo Futre to earn the necessary two points to keep alive Portugal's hopes of qualifying for the finals in Sweden next year.

The Netherlands and Greece trail Portugal by one point but both have a game in hand.

The Portuguese, semifinalists in 1984, also need an emphatic win to improve their goal difference which is far inferior to the Dutch who thrashed Malta 8-0 in Valletta.

Their record against the Maltese, whose morale was lifted considerably by the last result, does not suggest they will inflict a heavy defeat.

Although Portugal have won four of the five matches between the two, none was by more than two goals. And Malta can look back proudly to March 1987 when they drew 2-2 in Funchal.

"Malta is traditionally a difficult adversary for the 'Portuguese,'" coach Horst Heese said on arrival in the northern city of Oporto.

The suspension of defender Joe Galea, sent off in injury time of the first match, could be critical as he neutralized Atletico Madrid winger Futre, to whom Portugal look for inspiration as well as goals.

Portuguese spirits will also be lifted by playing at the Antas Stadium, scene of their stirring 1-0 victory over the Netherlands last October.

The home side will be without midfielder Rui Barros, who has tendonitis and is replaced by Jorge Cadete.

India's Krishnan falls to Garrow in U.S. indoor

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (R) — Ramesh Krishnan of India was the biggest upset victim of the day in the first round of the \$750,000 U.S. Indoor Tennis Championships.

The tournament's top names, including Ivan Lendl, Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi and Brad Gilbert, all received first round byes and did not play Monday.

Krishnan, ranked 85th in the world, had expected to play Milan Srejber of Czechoslovakia, but instead faced Brian Garrow of the United States when Srejber did not turn up.

Garrow, a solid serve and volley player ranked 106th, defeated Krishnan 7-6, 3-6, 7-6.

Krishnan, countering Garrow's blistering serve and volley attack with pinpoint passing shots that grazed the sidelines, reached 6-6 and the tiebreak in the first set.

2 seeded players fall in Slims of Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY. Oklahoma (Agencies) — Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands and American Linda Harvey-Wild both sent seeded players packing in the first round of the \$150,000 Virginia Slims of Oklahoma Tennis Tournament.

Schultz, runner-up here in 1988, eliminated fourth-seeded American Meredith McGrath 4-6, 6-2, 6-4, while Harvey-Wild ousted sixth-seeded compatriot Susan Sloane 6-2, 6-2.

Schultz had mixed feelings about facing McGrath in her first match. She and the American have the same coach, Juan Nunez of Chile, and are sharing a hotel room for the tournament.

"It's tough to play against friends," said Schultz, who is ranked number 72. "You'd rather play against someone else, so you could both go to the second round. We kind of made jokes about it, but in your heart you don't want to do it."

Harvey-Wild said she pays little attention to seedings. "Seedings aren't too important. They are based on what players have done in the past, not what they are doing when they play you," Harvey-Wild said.

Two other seeds had smoother sailing.

Second seed Conchita Martinez of Spain advanced 6-2, 6-0 over American Mary Lou Daniels, and third-seeded Amy Frazier beat fellow-American Peanut Louie Harper 6-4, 7-6.

Top seed Jana Novotna of Czechoslovakia, this year's Australian Open runner-up, will play her opening match on Tuesday against American Carrie Cunningham.

Meanwhile Jennifer Capriati has entered the \$500,000 Virginia Slims of Florida in what will mark the one-year anniversary of her professional debut at the 1990 Virginia Slims.

Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



Becker withdraws from Stuttgart classic

STUTTGART, Germany (AP) — Boris Becker will take a month off with a hamstring injury, delaying his attempt to regain the No. 1 world ranking in tennis.

Ion Tiriac, Becker's manager, announced Monday that Becker sit out to heal an injury to his upper thigh. He defaulted Saturday in a tournament in Belgium, costing him the No. 1 ranking to Sweden's Stefan Edberg.

"His body has run out of gas," said Tiriac, who blamed an extensive schedule that included Davis Cup matches for the injury.

Becker gained the top spot in the ATP Tour computer after winning the Australian Open for the first time in his career in January.

But he held it only 20 days before defaulting with a strained hamstring in the semifinals of the Donny Indoor Championships in Brussels.

Although he was beaten in the semifinals by eventual winner Guy Forget, Edberg recaptured the No. 1-ranking he had held for 24 weeks before being dethroned by Becker. Edberg now leads by 17 points and will play in Stuttgart.

Becker will begin his hiatus by sitting out the \$1-million Stuttgart Eurocard Classic, which he won last year. That will cost him a large number of points to Edberg on the

ATP Tour computer.

Tiriac said Becker is being treated by Dr. Hans-Wilhelm Mueller-Wohlfarth. He said Becker had been drained after the heat of the Australian summer.

"He played seven tough matches in Australia, then went to play Davis Cup without time to regenerate," Tiriac said.

"He made the Davis Cup his priority this time and wanted to play no matter what."

Becker, who guided Germany to Davis Cup championships in 1988 and 1989, skipped the competition last year, saying he wanted to concentrate on gaining the No. 1 ranking. But he rejoined the team this year, and played two tough singles and a doubles match in leading Germany to a narrow victory over Italy earlier this month.

Tiriac said Becker was set on regaining the No. 1 spot but would not risk a more serious injury.

"His future is not in the computer," Tiriac said. "His future is to play good tennis, and I'll bet you anything that he will be No. 1 again."

In Brussels, Becker criticised the ATP Tour for forcing him into too many events to protect his ranking. He accepted a wild-card entry in Brussels to try to stay atop the rankings.



Boris Becker

Horoscope not received

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris
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"With this razor I can shave my face faster and stay in bed five minutes longer!"

JUMBLE.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

STEAE
INGAR
FELBAF
DEGLUC

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: HER

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SIEGE ROBIN UNPACK MARAUD
Answer: When a woman really begins to "count" on a man -- HIS "NUMBER" IS UP

THE Daily Crossword

by Fran Ragus

ACROSS
1 Defect
3 Defense gp.
10 Norman's game
14 Deck in fiery
15 Completed
18 Hangout
17 Bait
24 City down under
20 Mariner
21 Attention
22 Fix a clock
23 Admonish
25 Comic Jay
30 Potent
34 Drivers of yore
36 Hold up
37 Skin
38 "Exodus" hero
39 Wrestling style
40 Numero —
41 "The Boss"
45 Refers to abba
47 Expose to wind and sun
48 Ena
49 Idea —
50 Restrainer
53 Relatives
54 Drug agent
55 Nell of space
61 See eye to eye
62 Certain entertainer
63 Colorful fish
64 Be sparing
65 Earth sci.
66 Document
67 Window dressing
DOWN
1 Domino
2 Locale
3 Russ. river
4 Authoritative statement
5 Nautical chain
6 "Is an island"
7 Assent
8 — Aviv
9 Bead
10 Attach with pale
11 Rowing blades
12 Fila
13 Worry
19 Birds of a region
21 Hence
24 Cuckoo
25 — one's teeth
26 Always to poets
27 Rugby play
28 Biblical word
29 Chattered
30 Beautiful women
31 Aligned
32 Gr. poet
33 Valuable wood
35 Mountain lakes
39 Energy
41 Picture
42 US author
43 Profit
44 Hockey team
46 Ornament
49 Boat
50 Crippled
51 — the Red
52 Bullets
53 Tree knot
55 — da capo
56 Tear apart
57 Whale
58 Fabled bird
60 Unseal to poets
61 Burro

Romania edges towards open market system with currency auction

BUCHAREST (R) — Romania's currency plunged to a black market rate of 200 to the dollar Monday as the national bank nudged the country closer to a Western-style economic system by holding its first currency auction.

It is a first bold step on the road towards achieving full and real convertibility of the leu, Romanian Bank for Foreign Trade senior dealer Catalin Moisuc said.

The Bank for Foreign Trade was among six Romanian banks authorised to take part in the auction, the first after four decades of inflated communist-style fixed exchange rates.

The National Bank, which supervised the auction, will soon be transformed into a Western-style central bank as part of the nation's market reforms.

"We expect the rate to undergo a see-saw fluctuation over the next weeks, as demand for hard currency is very high and each bank keeps its offer and operations secret," Moisuc said.

The leu's auction rate put the currency at one-sixth its official rate of 35 lei to the dollar. New auctions will be held daily to provide an inter-bank currency rate.

Each new rate will be published alongside the official rate, which has been in effect since last November.

The Bank for Foreign Trade was joined in the auction by the Commercial Bank, the Bank for Development, the Agro Bank, Mind Bank (bank for small industries and free initiative) and Bank Coop (the bank for cooperative credits).

Bulgaria sets new leva exchange rate

SOFIA (AP) — The government established a new currency exchange rate almost twice the black-market dollar rate, news reports said Tuesday.

The decision setting an exchange of 28.25 Bulgarian leva to the dollar is expected to bring into government coffers some of the estimated \$1 billion citizens hold privately and undercut black-market dealing.

Bulgaria, reeling from its worst economic crisis, has suspended payments on its \$11 billion foreign debt because of a lack of hard currency reserves.

Previously, the official dollar rate for the Bulgarian currency was 7.1, but as late as Monday it was trading on the street at as much as 10-1.

The new rate is aimed at preventing the economy from switching to increased use of the U.S. dollar and other foreign currencies instead of Bulgaria's.

The new rate is one of a series of measures to reform the economy, loosen government control of the financial system and make the currency convertible.

The government recently gave banks permission to begin trading in Western currencies, and they primarily have been buying up dollars individuals are keeping privately.

On Feb. 1, Bulgaria drastically raised state-controlled prices in keeping with recommendations from the International Monetary Fund, from which it hopes to receive \$380 million in aid this year.

Gulf war outcome may cause abrupt decline in oil profit

WASHINGTON (AP) — High crude oil prices brought windfall profits to the major American oil companies in the last three months of 1990, but the government says the profits picture may change abruptly if crude prices decline after the Gulf war.

The Energy Department has reported that 18 major oil companies earned more than \$7 billion in the fourth quarter of last year, up 77 per cent from a year earlier because of higher crude prices.

Income from oil production — both foreign and domestic — jumped even more, by about 150 per cent, but some of that increase was offset by declining profits in refining and chemical production activities, the government said.

Nevertheless, Energy Department officials said they could find no evidence of price gouging on the part of oil companies and warned that future fluctuations in oil prices could make the profit gains only temporary.

The report by the Energy Information Administration said

the oil companies' "greatest gains in profitability were directly tied" to the sharp increases in crude oil prices that occurred in the months after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

According to figures, the 11 major U.S. oil companies that reported a breakdown in earnings had profit of nearly \$5 billion from oil and gas production alone, about a 150 per cent increase over the same three months of 1989.

"For major petroleum companies ... income from U.S. oil and gas production nearly tripled while their income from foreign oil and gas production more than doubled," the report said.

The report noted that while oil prices peaked at more than \$10 a 12-gallon barrel in mid-October, prices have been declining in recent months and could decline sharply once fighting stops in the Gulf war because of a current supply glut.

"If that is true, the sharp increase in oil and gas profitability ... will be transitory," the agency said.

Calvin Kent, the agency's administrator, said no evidence of nationwide price gouging was found and that for the entire year of 1990 oil industry profits were not unusually high when considered on the basis of return on equity.

"You had the results that you would have expected with the rise in crude prices," said Kent.

Edwin Rothschild, an energy expert for Public Citizen, a Washington-based consumer group, said the findings were "a clear indication that ... unanticipated windfalls were made" by the oil companies because of the Gulf crisis.

"And consumers were taken for a ride. Their pockets were lifted," Rothschild said.

The government's findings for the last three months of 1990 were largely expected since they reflected individual earnings reports disclosed separately by most of the major oil companies last month. The government report did not break down earnings by individual companies.

Turkish Airlines seeks plane delivery delay

ISTANBUL (R) — State-run Turkish Airlines is seeking a delay in deliveries of an Airbus 310 and two medium-haul Boeing 737-400 planes due to a sharp decline in air traffic caused by the Gulf war, an airline official said.

The Airbus, the last of 14 aircraft ordered in 1984, was scheduled to be delivered in June.

Delivery of the first Boeing 737 by the U.S. Boeing Company was due before March and the second one in June. They are both part of a 10-aircraft lease agreed last year with deliveries extending until 1995.

The official said offers had been made both to Boeing and the Airbus companies to have scheduled deliveries delayed to a later date before the end of this year.

Turkish Airlines, which is slated for privatisation, lost more than a third of its passengers between August and December last year due to flight cancellations and costlier oil and war risk insurance.

In 1989, the airline made a profit of around \$1.5 million compared to losses of around \$5.2 million in 1988.

U.S. firms expand overseas investments

NEW YORK (R) — American manufacturers boosted overseas investment sharply in 1990, launching 271 projects, 25 per cent more than the previous year, a business group has said.

"The 1990s clearly opened with a big bang in foreign investment," said Jim Greene, a specialist in global business trends at the Conference Board, a New York business group.

"Many of these projects, particularly new plants in Europe aimed at world markets, are betting heavily on an expanding open trade system," he said.

The business group said Europe was the leading site for the investments, attracting 67 per cent of all the projects — or a total of 167. Eastern Europe, excluding former East Germany, won 20 projects.

Britain, France and Germany, accounted for the bulk of all project sites in Europe, while Bulgaria and Poland attracted U.S. manufacturing investments for the first time.

The Soviet Union won seven projects, Hungary five and Czechoslovakia four. Former East Germany also attracted four investments.

Asia accounted for only 20 per cent of all investment, but was up a strong 66 per cent from the previous year with 53 projects.

Seven projects were targeted for China, six for Singapore, while Australia won 15 projects.

Canada also got 26 projects. The group said Du Pont, General Motors Corp. CPC International Inc. Chrysler Corp. and General Electric Co. accounted for 37 separate investments.

Jordanian businesses reel from Gulf war

AMMAN (R) — The Gulf war is squeezing Jordan's fragile economy, restaurants are empty and importers warn of supplies dwindling drastically.

Exports, imports and other services have been hit by high insurance costs and allied inspection of ships heading for the country's only port at Aqaba on the Red Sea.

Vessels are stopped and searched to prevent any breach of the U.N. embargo on Iraq. Jordan says it is complying with sanctions against its neighbour, previously its biggest export market, at huge cost to itself.

Importers say suppliers are demanding full payment in advance for goods compared with 20 per cent before the crisis, making it almost impossible to bring in supplies from abroad.

Amman shopkeepers say stocks of imported goods on which the country depends heavily are running low and warn of a crisis looming.

Elias Bulos, manager of Khalaf Supermarket, a major importer and distributor of foreign goods to shops and hotels, said: "We cannot import anything any more because of high war transport and insurance costs. Things are becoming very difficult. Our imported stocks are running out and we cannot substitute them."

He said the supermarket was already low on canned food, butter, pastas, sausages, candles, cereal, peas, beans and veal. They had already run out of chocolate, biscuits and cheese.

Stocks might last for a few more weeks, he said, but the delicatessen supplies had already run out. Other importers said stocks of alcohol were running low.

Bulos said daily sales had dropped about 40 per cent, with people buying only essentials.

"I used to have big daily orders from restaurants and hotels. Now the orders come in monthly," he said. "Business has never been this bad in my lifetime."

Exports to countries other than Iran have also been hurt by allied inspection of shipping to and from Aqaba.

Toufic Kawa, chairman of the Shipping Agents Association, reported a drastic drop in sea traffic since Jan. 15. Because of the inspection of cargoes, ships were taking a month to reach Aqaba, compared to 14 days before the crisis.

Vessels were waiting for a week at the Strait of Tiran leading into the Gulf of Aqaba to be searched, Kawa said.

He said war insurance, higher fuel prices, an emergency surcharge on Middle East shipping and inspection surcharges had increased shipping costs by 60 per cent.

The cost of sending a container from western Europe to Aqaba had jumped to \$2,500 from \$1,500, he added.

The United Nations estimates Jordan, which sympathises with Iraq while condemning its August invasion of Kuwait, has lost up to \$1.2 billion overall and will lose \$300 million monthly if the crisis continues.

Millions of dollars in overseas aid has been promised but is only starting to arrive now. The United States has said it is reviewing future aid to the Kingdom.

Restaurants are suffering along with other sectors.

"Business has dropped by 80 per cent since the war began," said Hassan Rabbah, owner of the popular Leonardo Da Vinci restaurant. "Those coming are mainly foreign journalists. It is really bad. We can hardly pay our expenses and costs. We're not breaking even, we're losing."

The plush Peking Chinese Restaurant, which normally has up to 100 people a night, is lucky to fill even one table now. Five Chinese cooks left after the war broke out on Jan. 17.

"Sometimes I'm surprised when people show up. But we understand ... we're not on a honeymoon, we're in the middle of a war," owner Moslem Shammout said.

Expatriate exodus, leaks delay Qatar's gas project

DUBAI (R) — Unexplained leaks and an exodus of Western workers fleeing the Gulf will delay natural gas production from Qatar's huge offshore North Field, oil industry sources say.

The field is the biggest in the world with 380 trillion cubic feet (10 trillion cubic metre) of reserves and was due to go on stream on Feb. 22, the 19th anniversary of the accession to the throne of Qatar's ruler, Sheikh Khalifa/Hamad Al Thani.

"The commissioning (of the field) will be delayed for a couple of months," an oil industry executive in the Gulf said. "There are still gas leaks into well casings which might be dangerous during production."

The Gulf war has dampened Qatar's hopes of finding customers for its natural gas as buyers are unlikely to commit themselves to multi-billion dollar long-term agreements until political stability is achieved in the region, the sources said.

Asked about the leaks, Qatar General Petroleum Corporation (QGPC) sources denied there were any at the North Field.

"The construction of platforms and 16 wells at the field are ready, but the reservoir is still not perforated," a petroleum engineer who visited the field recently said.

"Hydrogen sulphide, probably from a separate shallow field, is leaking into the well casings and sometimes bubbles up to the surface from the seabed," he said.

"They (Qataris) probably want to find where it is coming from before starting production."

Hydrogen sulphide is poisonous and flammable.

Oil industry sources in the Gulf said QGPC had hired experts in gas leaks since the problem first started in mid-1990 and took steps to isolate the possible sources.

Another oil industry source said some sub-contractors working in the field had pulled their Western experts out after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August.

Qatar, a small oil producer in the Gulf is relying on the North Field gas to see its economy through the next century as its oil wells dry sometime in the next 40 years.

The first phase of the North Field development will produce around 800 million cubic feet (22 million cubic metre) of gas per day for existing power plants and industries in Qatar, which now run on diminishing associated gas produced from oil fields.

Qatar plans to utilise the gas in a number of new industrial projects such as an aluminium smelter, and petrochemical plants in joint-ventures with Western concerns.

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AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Tuesday, February 19, 1991
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell		
U.S. dollar	665.0	669.0	French franc	131.9
Pound Sterling	1304.6	1312.4	Japanese yen (for 100)	309.6
Deutschmark	448.7	451.4	Dutch guilder	398.4
Swiss franc	523.6	524.7	Swedish crown	120.1
			Italian lira (for 100)	59.8
			Belgian franc (for 10)	217.6

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

	One Sterling	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.9515/25	1.1525/35
	1.4900/07	1.6790/80
	1.2777/84	30.65/70
	5.0730/80	131.05/15
	1118/1119	5.5640/90
	131.05/15	5.6250/8300
	5.7240/90	5.7240/90
One ounce of gold	361.80/362.30	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — The All Ordinaries index soared briefly above the 1,400 level for the first time in more than four months as cashed-up investors scrambled to join the sharp rally on world-bourses. The index ended up 22.7 points at 1,339.3.

TOKYO — Hopes for an early end to the Gulf war pushed the Nikkei stock average up nearly 900 points to close above the 26,000 level for the first time since Aug. 21. The Nikkei rose 886.27 points, or 3.50 per cent, to 26,230.01.

HONG KONG — The Hang Seng ended sharply higher with a 60.76 point, or 1.76 per cent, gain, rising to 3,473.42 on a rally in Tokyo.

BOMBAY — The stock exchange was closed to enable brokers to complete business done in the three weeks ending last Friday, when the BSE index rose 15.37 points to 1,039.60.

FRANKFURT — Shares continued to rally on hopes of a quick end to the Gulf war. The Dax index closed at 1,572.57, up 41.38 or 2.70 per cent.

PARIS — The market paused for breath after prices soared in mid-session. But the CAC-40 index still ended 24.57 higher at 1,694.96.

ZURICH — Prices closed higher on active buying, buoyed by Tokyo's strong showing. Dealers said Blue Chips were still in demand. The all-share SPI index closed at 1,010, up 13.5 and its highest since last September.

LONDON — Shares closed firmer after holding morning gains through a dull afternoon session. The FTSE index closed up 21.4 at 2,318.3.

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Performances: Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 699238
PLAZA

SUMMER
SCHOOL

Performances: 12:00, 3:00, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15

Moscow facing biggest crime wave for decades — minister

MOSCOW (R) — Interior Minister Boris Pugo said on Tuesday the Soviet Union faced the biggest crime wave since World War II, with violence, organised crime and fraud thriving on the country's economic decline.

Pugo, a hardliner appointed late last year to curb major crime and ethnic conflicts, said the number of crimes registered in 1990 rose by 13 per cent against the previous year.

"What is particularly worrying is the overall rise, reaching the highest level since the war... and the aggressiveness of armed elements," he told a news conference.

"We are talking all necessary measures but no substantial turn in the trend is yet visible."

Official statistics portrayed crime as worst in republics currently pressing for their independence from Moscow. The highest growth 43.9 per cent, was in the southern Republic of Armenia, while Estonia registered 24.4 per cent, Lithuania 18.6 per cent, and Latvia 16.9 per cent.

Drug offences rose by 24 per cent over 1989, cases of serious fraud and misuse of state property by 19.9 per cent.

Pugo defended a decision to set up joint patrols including soldiers and police to check street crime. He said the patrols, usually conducted by a police officer, a military officer and two soldiers, had helped fight crime, but could not produce results on their own.

"We have got to restore faith between the people and the police, so that they believe in us and help us," Pugo said.

The patrols are now present on the streets of nine out of 15 republics. The country's Parliamentary Supervisory Committee ruled Friday there were substantial flaws in Gorbachev's decree setting up the patrols.

Pugo denied suggestions the central Interior Ministry was trying to dictate to republican ministries, adding that future legislation should set out clearly the relationship between Moscow and the republics.

He cited the example of the United States, where certain spe-

cific crimes are dealt with by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and others left to constituent states. "Perhaps when the future is mapped out certain crimes, in the same way, will be allotted to a central ministry or other service."

Meanwhile, a 50-year-old man was reported to have died Monday on gunshot wounds suffered in the Jan. 13 Soviet military crackdown in Lithuania, bringing the death toll from recent violence in the Baltics to 22.

Vytautas Kancevicius, a father of two, died in a hospital in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius, according to the independent Baltfax News Agency.

He suffered gunshot wounds in the stomach and intestines when the Lithuanian Broadcast Centre was stormed by Soviet troops last month, said Rita Dapkus, a spokeswoman for the republic's legislature, quoting the Health Ministry.

Ms. Dapkus said more than 300 people were injured in the attack, with Kancevicius and two other people among the most seriously

hurt. The other two are now out of danger, she said.

Seven other people have been killed in incidents in Lithuania and Latvia since Jan. 13 — six killed in Latvia at the hands of Soviet Interior Ministry troops, and a man killed at a Soviet-manned checkpoint outside Vilnius.

In a separate development, the leader of a shadowy Georgian paramilitary group angrily denounced the republic's nationalist president Monday after Soviet forces stormed one of his bases with tanks and armoured vehicles.

Djaba Iosseliani, leader of the Mkhedroni (Horsemen) militia, said nationalist President Zviad Gamsakhurdia as behind the early morning raid and shootout in which three of his men were wounded.

In a move likely to exacerbate tensions in the restive southern republic, Iosseliani told a crowd of 2,000 on Tbilisi's main Rustaveli Avenue that he was forming a political party to combat "fascism" in Georgia.

Inkatha, ANC tell supporters to make peace

DURBAN (R) — South Africa's biggest black political movements, trying to keep alive a three-week-old peace accord, appealed to grassroots supporters to liaise with each other to end smouldering conflict.

The African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party, long-time rivals, said in a rare joint statement Monday night: "We inform all our followers that all fighting among and between them must stop."

"We declare that the organisations are now at peace. Should misunderstandings arise between them they are to be settled by discussions at local leadership level," senior ANC and Inkatha officials said after talks in the Natal province port of Durban.

Meeting for the first time in 28 years, ANC Deputy President Nelson Mandela and Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi signed a truce on Jan. 29 urging supporters to end the violence that has killed more than 4,000 people in Natal and around Johannesburg in five years.

But the accord has been threatened by continuing gun and spear battles. Seventeen Inkatha supporters were killed in a bus ambush on Feb. 10 near the Natal capital, Pietermaritzburg.

On Monday senior officials of the movements led by Inkatha national chairman Frank Mdlalose and ANC intelligence chief Jacob Zuma agreed to set up a joint committee to monitor implementation of the Jan. 29 accord.

"Peacemaking mechanisms are being established in all areas as rapidly as possible," the joint statement said.

Political analysts said the inclusion in Monday's talks of the movement's rival Pietermaritzburg leaders — Harry Gwala of the ANC and David Ntombela of Inkatha — indicated progress in peace-making at local level.

The officials jointly toured ANC-Inkatha battlefields around Durban before the talks began in what analysts said was an unprecedented move towards cooperation between the groups.

Violence between the organisations has threatened moves towards full negotiations on ending the 42-year-old apartheid segregation system and establishing a non-racial democracy.

56 killed, dozens hurt in Philippine fighting

MANILA (R) — Armed men lobbed grenades at a crowded minibus and Communist guerrillas shot dead a company executive in an upsurge of violence that killed 56 people in the Philippines over the past three days, police said Tuesday.

In the bloodiest incident, soldiers killed 19 New People's Army (NPA) rebels and wounded dozens in a two-day battle last weekend near Lacub town in Abra province, 330 kilometres north of Manila.

Police said 10 people were killed and 16 wounded Monday when armed men opened fire and lobbed two grenades at a minibus in the central province of Camarines Norte.

All the victims were civilian passengers. Police said they did not know the motive for the attack.

Company executive Aurelio Reginaldo was on his way home in the southern city of Davao Monday night when four gunmen sprayed his car with bullets, killing Reginaldo and wounding his bodyguard, his driver and his 14-year-old son.

A leftist rebel group claimed responsibility for the attack and warned there would be more against "capitalists who refuse to treat their workers more humanely."

The rebels accused Reginaldo, personnel manager of the Lapanday Development Corporation, which runs a banana plantation in Davao, of "labour despotism," blaming him for the lay-off of about 90 plantation workers since 1988.

Helicopters and fighter-bombers strafed NPA positions during the fighting in Abra which broke out when rebels ambushed police units on their way to replace colleagues stationed near Lacub.

Four policemen were killed in

the ambush and 17 were wounded, police spokesman Major Gamaliel Pia said.

Six soldiers, two policemen and three guerrillas were killed when NPA rebels, armed with mortars, attacked an army outpost in Cagwait town, Surigao Del Sur province, on the southern island of Mindanao Sunday, police said.

Government troops killed 11 guerrillas in fighting Sunday and Monday in two towns on the central island of Leyte, the military said.

Several hundred NPA rebels took part in the dawn attack in Cagwait but the estimated 80 soldiers manning the outpost held their ground until reinforcements came the following day, police spokesman Colonel Jorje Ludovico said in a telephone interview.

Police said rebel ground fire damaged a helicopter carrying regional commander Colonel Manuel Salimbangon and his staff, who had flown to the area to supervise the counter-attack.

Salimbangon was unhurt but a helicopter gunner was wounded. Meanwhile a leading senator said Tuesday the Philippines has become a favourite destination for terrorists because of its lax immigration rules.

"Our special concern is that the Philippines seems to be a favourite of terrorist group, some coming in as students," said Leticia Ramos-Shahani, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"It all boils down to the fact that we are lax in screening foreigners who enter the country."

Shahani quoted Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo as saying the Philippines was the most lax member of the Association of South East Asian Nations in screening aliens.

The other members are Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Brunei.

COLUMN

Snow in the Sahara

ALGIERS (R) — Snow has fallen in Algeria's Sahara Desert for the first time in more than 30 years. Algerian television has reported. It showed expanses of snow covered sand and dramatic contrasts of snow rocks rising behind dunes and palm oases in the region of Bechar, 965 kilometres southwest of Algiers. Heavy snow has covered mountains of northern Algeria during the coldest winter in several years.

Actor released from hospital

LOS ANGELES (R) — American film star Kirk Douglas was released from hospital Monday, five days after he was injured in a mid-air collision between a helicopter and a stunt plane, a hospital spokesman said. "Douglas had a cut on his scalp and a few bruises and scrapes. Other than that, he is in good condition and has mended well."

Cedars Sinai Hospital spokesman Ron Wise said. Douglas, 72, pilot Noel Blanc, son of cartoon voice expert Mel Blanc, and off-duty policeman Michael Carra were 40 feet (12 metres) off the ground in a Bell 206 helicopter when it collided with a two-seater Pitts Special stunt biplane near Santa Paula, California, about 50 kilometres northwest of Los Angeles. Pilot Lee Maneloki and his student, David Tomlinson, 18, in the stunt plane, were killed. Carra had minor injuries and Blanc is in hospital with serious injuries.

TV debates cause family rows

MOSCOW — Soviet deputies are being urged to halt the televising of their parliamentary debates on the grounds that they cause furious family quarrels. A long-suffering viewer from the northern Russian textile city of Ivanovo complained in a letter distributed in parliament that the lengthy broadcasts brought him into dispute with his wife. "My wife defends 'democrats', I defend conservatives and after some programmes on the radio or television, we quarrel to the point of insulting one another," said the writer, whose name was given only as Savichev. "The country has turned into a madhouse and a cuckoo's nest," he added. The letter to Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, a military adviser to President Mikhail Gorbachev, was circulated among deputies at the Supreme Soviet or parliament, which gathered for a new session expected to last four months.

Paris customs left with time on their hands

PARIS (R) — Customs officers who tightened up security measures at French airports during the Gulf crisis have been left with 22,174 fake Carier watches on their hands. The customs service said the counterfeit Cartiers, all made in Hong Kong, were picked up in the last two weeks by X-ray machines used to screen passengers' luggage at Paris's Charles de Gaulle Airport. They were hidden in trunks bound for Cameroon, Benin and Togo, labelled as containing sewing machines.

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Actor picks up an honorary doctor degree

ABILENE, Texas (AP) — Charlton Heston picked up an honorary doctor of fine degree and amused the crowd by wearing the academic hood backward. Abilene Christian University (ACU) President William J. Teague presented the honour during a private dinner Saturday at the Abilene Civic Centre, during which Heston, known for roles in films on Biblical themes, read selections from the Old Testament Book of Exodus. When he put on the hood — a fold of cloth worn over the back of a scholarly robe to indicate the earning of a degree — backward, the audience began to snicker and ACU Board Chairman H. Lynn Packer quipped, "that's OK. You can wear it as a bib or a hood." Heston responded, "one thing I should know how to do is wear funny suits." The actor began developing a relationship with ACU in 1988 when he was asked to speak at the university. In 1985 his wife, photographer Lydia Clarke, exhibited works in ACU's Shore Art Gallery. She was honoured Saturday with a certificate of appreciation from the university. He is known for roles in films such as *The Ten Commandments*, *Ben Hur*, for which he won the best-actor Oscar for 1959, and *The Agony And The Ecstasy*.

1st woman heads U.N. refugee body

GENEVA (R) — Sadako Ogata, a Japanese university professor, took office as head of the United Nations agency overseeing 15 million refugees worldwide.

Ogata 63, was elected U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) by the world body's General Assembly in December for three years. She is the first woman to hold the post.

A professor of international relations at Tokyo's Sofia University, she replaces Thorvald

Stoltenberg who resigned in November to become foreign minister of Norway.

Addressing staff, Ogata said the refugee issue should be put to countries as a "test of their commitment to human rights."

"A preventive strategy is required to ensure that people are able to live peacefully and productively in their own countries," she added.

Ogata's career has included

posts as Japan's permanent representative to the U.N., head of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board and Japanese representative at the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

Japan, already the second biggest contributor to UNHCR after the United States, is expected to raise its contributions to refugee relief following Ogata's appointment.

Peruvian epidemic blamed on years of neglect

LIMA (AP) — The nation's top health official says the cholera epidemic that has caused at least 100 deaths and threatened Peru's food export industry is the result of years of governmental neglect.

"Not just this government, but all the governments in the past 30 years are responsible," Health Minister Dr. Carlos Vidal said Monday.

The growing epidemic has aroused fears in Latin America and elsewhere in the world that the disease could be spread by Peruvian travellers or from any of Peru's diverse food exports ranging from fish to mangoes.

On Wednesday, European Community (EC) officials in Brussels are expected to decide which Peruvian foods can be safely imported. The ruling could reportedly affect up to \$700 million in export earnings for Peru.

Vidal said the only foods with a cholera contamination risk are uncooked seafood and fresh strawberries. He said these products can be made safe through proper cleaning and preparation.

Vidal said the epidemic's underlying cause is the lack of basic sewage and drinking water systems. In many poor urban neighbourhoods those systems are substandard or do not exist. Water is delivered in trucks with dirty tanks or stored in cisterns that are not routinely disinfected, he said.

In Lima, a serious health hazard has been caused by leaky sewage pipes that have contaminated drinking water conduits. Many street vendors sell food and snacks without access to running water and basic hygienic services. Cholera, spread in feces-contaminated water and food, affects the intestines, causing diarrhoea and severe fluid loss. It can be fatal if not treated.

Vidal said the government has neglected its responsibility for providing basic services to ensure the public health.

Dien Bien Phu — echoes of another war in another era

By Chris Peterson
Reuters

DIEN BIEN PHU, Vietnam — In the dead of night in a remote corner of northwest Vietnam, you can almost hear the ghosts of another war cry out.

As moonlight eerily light up the rice paddies of Dien Bien Phu, the silence is broken by the howl of a dog. Nothing else stirs.

Beneath the glittering, fertile rice paddies lie the bodies of thousands of Vietnamese and French dead, undisturbed since the climactic battle of Dien Bien Phu 37 years ago, which sounded the death knell of French colonial hopes and signalled the emergence of Communist Vietnam.

"Phap? (French?)", asked the wizened old man of a Western visitor in the dusty main street of Dien Bien Phu town.

Asked if he knew about the Gulf war, he nodded, and said: "War again. It's very bad. Many died here before." Then shaking his head he shuffled off, carrying a scrawny chicken and a bundle of vegetables to the market.

Few outsiders visit Dien Bien Phu these days. Tucked away in the northwest corner of Vietnam, the heart-shaped valley is a scant

16 kilometres from the border with Laos, and some 300 kilometres west of the capital Hanoi.

There is no air service, the town has electricity for only three hours a night, and there are no telephones. The only road to the region is little better than a rough track, crawling over Pha Dinh Pass before dropping into the valley.

The present town sprang up in 1960 the Hanoi government of what was then North Vietnam encouraged ethnic Vietnamese from the poorer coastal towns of Vinh and Thanh Hoa to settle here.

"When we first came here in 1960 it was desolate. We built this place. At night we could hear tigers and bears shuffling around, and in the morning there would be their tracks in the dew," said a woman in her 60s who runs a small cafe selling Pho, the traditional Vietnamese noodle soup.

To the south of Dien Bien Phu Valley lies the small village of Ban Yen, its stilted wooden houses home to several hundred members of Vietnam's Black Thai ethnic minority.

During the afternoon, only children and women can be seen. The men are in the hills, hunting

a variety of animals for the communal pot with crossbows and ancient flintlock rifles.

An old lady of 75, wearing the traditional embroidered head-dress of the Black Thai, served bitter tea and sour starfruit and cast her mind back to the battle which ended in victory over the French for the Viet Minh forces of General Vo Nguyen Giap on May 7, 1954.

"I didn't know what the fighting was for. Why did they come? It was so peaceful. My brother was killed when the French bombers came. We fled here to the hills and the forests. It was scary. But it was long ago. There are many, many dead in the fields over there," she said.

"Foreigners don't come here now," she added. The valley is still littered with the rusting debris of war — French tanks and artillery pieces lie where they were abandoned, and many French bunkers and command posts are exposed.

No one knows for sure how many soldiers lie where they fell in the fields and bunkers of Dien Bien Phu.

Statistics are scarce, but Bernard Fall, respected French-born historian and author of *The Siege of Dien Bien Phu* — Hell In A

Very Small Place, reckoned virtually all 15,000 men of the French garrison were killed, wounded or taken prisoner.

Viet Minh losses are put at 25,000 killed or wounded. Local military officials would not say how many Viet Minh died.

According to Fall, there are about 3,000 French and 7,000 Viet Minh soldiers beneath the paddies.

Joint Franco-Vietnamese efforts to trace the remains came to an abrupt halt in 1955 when Ngo Dinh Diem, then president of South Vietnam, refused to allow North Vietnamese teams to search in the South.

But two memorials to the dead of Dien Bien Phu exist. For the Vietnamese dead, a carefully-tended cemetery containing some 600 graves lies in the shadow of the French stronghold Etienne 2, which cost the attackers hundreds of casualties before it was overwhelmed.

For the French dead, a simple concrete slab dated 1984 lies in a field near the bunker of the vanquished French commander, Brigadier General Christian Marie Ferdinand de la Croix de Castries. It is marked "to the officers and soldiers of the French army killed at Dien Bien Phu."

Tensions between ethnic Turks, Bulgarians split southern town

SOFIA (AP) — Municipal authorities have warned they would call in police if needed to end an explosive school dispute in the southern town of Kardzhali between ethnic Turks and Bulgarians.

The Bulgarian News Agency (BTA) reported that social tension in the city, 250 kilometres southeast of Sofia, reached "critical limits" over the issue of Turkish-language education.

"Until now there have been no clashes, but the situation is really tense," police Major Christo

Dimitrov said in a telephone interview from Kardzhali.

Kardzhali's approximately 80,000 people are divided about evenly between ethnic Turks and ethnic Bulgarians.

About 500 Bulgarians opposed to having Turkish taught in elementary school gathered Monday in the town square. Municipal officials agreed to meet a delegation to hear their complaints.

The conflict began on Feb. 4, when thousands of ethnic Turkish schoolchildren boycotted classes to press demands for the the

Turkish language to be included in the curriculum.

Many continued to stay away from classes Monday, some to back demands for more teaching of Turkish, others out of fear of harm from Bulgarian children and their parents.

"They do not let our children in schools. There are even some attempts to provoke clashes," said Refie Adem, 33, mother of two Turkish children. "I tell my children to go straight home and not answer any provocation."

Many Khmer Rouge refugees disappear, others go to U.N. camps

By Peter Eng
The Associated Press

SITE 8 REFUGEE CAMP, Thailand — The distant bamboo hills once seen from the dirt road are gone, and with them thousands of refugees Western relief workers had tried for a decade to reach.

About 60,000 to 100,000 civilians controlled by Khmer Rouge guerrillas lived in "hidden camps" like Khao Din, once nestled at the base of a mountain near Site 8, a Khmer Rouge camp open to U.N. officials.

There were reports of many human rights violations in the hidden camps and Western aid officials were not allowed into them, despite repeated appeals. Khao Din and all the other hidden camps were moved from Thailand just across the border into western Cambodia by mid-1990, apparently on orders of Thai authorities. No international outcry resulted.

"Nobody seemed to be interested," said Jean-Jacques Fressard, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Thailand. "It was as if these people never existed."

"Most of them were brought to very unhealthy areas and thousands have tried to get back to Thailand for medical help," he said. "Some of those with malaria are in very bad shape, because they are too far away or were prevented from coming. Some died on the way."

Fressard quoted some refugees as saying the Communist guerrillas made them leave close relatives behind, to ensure their return, when they went to the U.N. camps for treatment.

Many former residents of the hidden camps, however, have been allowed to resettle in U.N.-aided Khmer Rouge camps like Site 8, Site K and O'Trao.

Other Cambodians arrive from other parts of the country, fleeing government conscription or seeking relatives. About 63,000 refugees now live in U.N.-aided Khmer Rouge camps, where they receive food, medical care and education.

Thousands of other civilians in

Khmer Rouge zones visit the camps for medical treatment, to see relatives or to put their children in school.

In rural areas controlled by non-Communist guerrillas, rebel leaders have embarked on a U.S.-financed development programme, building village schools, hospitals and supplying new machinery to farmers.

A Western diplomat said, on condition of anonymity, that the mentality behind the hidden Khmer Rouge camps was slowly eroding, mostly through efforts of the U.N. Border Relief Operation (UNBRO).

"The Khmer Rouge want education," he said. "They even steal UNBRO textbooks. Before, they didn't want to touch anything. They know they cannot be isolated, cannot live by themselves."

Zones controlled by the Khmer Rouge are among the most malarial in the world. Hospitals in the U.N.-aided camps have treated a dramatically higher number of people in recent months.

Seng Sok, a Khmer Rouge official at Site 8, said the guerrilla zones had enough food, but were short of medicine.

Some of the malaria patients, he said, were Cambodians who could reach U.N. camps for the first time because the guerrillas had expanded their territory. He said some people were trucked from up to 50 kilometres away by arrangement with Thai authorities.

Young victims of malaria filled the hospital during a recent visit to Site 8, on the southern stretch of Thai-Cambodian border.

Pei Ek, 5, lay still on a bamboo-slat bed, an intravenous tube in his arm, struggling to chew a biscuit. His father, a food porter for the Khmer Rouge, carried the boy through the jungle for several days after the guerrillas granted his request for treatment at Site 8.

Khmer Rouge guerrillas have seized areas with rich soil, timber, and gem and gold mines. Western diplomat said, but it is unclear what share of those resources are available to civilians. He said security was not a major

concern because barbed wire lines are well beyond the refugee settlements.

The largest reported concentration of people is at Anlong Veng, a collection of villages that is opposite O'Trao and just over a mountain.

Gary Knight, a British photographer who was there in December, said many soldiers at Anlong Veng were missing legs from land mines or had severe malaria, but that civilians appeared healthy. He said there were many cattle, banana trees, vegetable plots and at least one hospital.

Most people who later lived in the hidden camps reached Thailand in 1979-80, as the Khmer Rouge retreated from the Vietnamese invasion that ended their brutal 3½ years of rule over Cambodia.

The diplomat said the Khmer Rouge brought some to Thailand by force, but most were people who had been in Khmer Rouge areas for years and were not as abused as others by the regime. After the Vietnamese invasion, they were marked as Khmer Rouge supporters.

According to the diplomat, most of the people "came because they were alienated by other groups. They couldn't stay in their villages and they couldn't go to the non-Communists because the non-Communists wouldn't receive them."

He said the refugees had two basic functions in the Khmer Rouge scheme: fighting and portering for fighters.

Guerrilla abuses reported in the camps included making children carry arms through mined areas and not letting critically ill people go to outside hospitals. Defectors from some camps described underground prisons, restraints on marriage and religion and bans on contact with the outside world.

The first break in the system was the opening of Site 8 in 1985, after a Vietnamese offensive emptied the old border refugee camps. In 1988-89, in response to strong outside pressure, the Khmer Rouge allowed Site K and O'Trao to open as U.N.-aided facilities and moved thousands of people in from the hidden camps.